

# In Abundance:

An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape  
of Collective Giving in the U.S.



Dorothy A. Johnson Center  
FOR PHILANTHROPY



Philanthropy  
Together

2023

# A Message From Philanthropy Together

It is with profound excitement, and with deep gratitude to the research team of Dr. Adriana Loson-Ceballos and Dr. Michael Layton, that Philanthropy Together unveils this comprehensive exploration of the collective giving landscape across the United States.

For generations, cultures globally have harnessed the power of collective giving — a practice now surging. Once a mere ripple in philanthropy's vast ocean, this incredible model of united generosity has swelled into an unstoppable force.

What a full-circle moment this report represents! The 2016 landscape research catalyzed the creation of Philanthropy Together, where hundreds of collective giving advocates envisioned this movement's ascent to new heights — in scale of reach and depth of impact. *In Abundance* shows a vision brought to life, and we now have the data and the stories to show what happens when we dream big together.

As you read through these findings, we hope you see it as the launchpad to even bolder ideas, thinking, and practices. What if every town, issue, and community in the world had a collective giving group acting as a champion for change? It's all possible, if we continue to act in abundance.

With enormous gratitude and pride,

Sara, Isis, and Ilyasah

*On behalf of all of Philanthropy Together, Braintrust, and the hundreds of thousands of collective givers around the world pushing forward this work every day.*



**Sara Lomelin**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Isis Krause**  
Chief Strategy Officer



**Ilyasah N. Shabazz**  
Senior Operations &  
Communications Director



# A Message From the Authors

Dear Reader,

As we write these words together, from sunny San Diego and partly sunny Grand Rapids, Michigan, we find great cause for optimism. We are fully cognizant of the challenges that our nation and the world faces, as well as the trenchant and multiple critiques of philanthropy. But in conducting this research, we have found hope in the dynamic growth of collective giving, a form of philanthropy that draws upon the traditions of mutual aid and solidarity among marginalized communities, that by its very nature engenders connection — social capital, to embrace the jargon of our academic training — both within groups and between them, and celebrates generosity and elevates community-driven solutions.

We are thrilled to present the comprehensive findings from our recent research on the transformative impact of collective giving in the United States. As detailed in this report, participation in collective giving has far-reaching and deeply meaningful effects for all involved — donors, recipients, and communities.

We began to dream about doing this work together at the height of the pandemic in 2020. As partners in this project, some might find us an odd pair. One of us was in primary school when the other earned a doctorate. One of us earned a doctorate and weeks later gave birth to a beautiful daughter. One of us is adept at technology, while the other has a habit of speaking on mute while on Zoom. One of us is at the forefront of embracing artificial intelligence, while the other persisted in thinking that AI referred to the initials and nickname of Allen Iverson, the Philadelphia 76ers Basketball Hall of Fame scoring guard.

But what we share in common is transcendent. We share a firm commitment to producing research that drives new knowledge creation, that builds more just and equitable communities, and that is conducted in partnership with study participants. Our commitment to elevating the potential of this generosity movement has been truly transformative for us as researchers. We have both found great joy in this project. In collaboratively conducting this research, we have experienced something similar to what members of giving circles experience. In coming together for a shared purpose, informed by shared values, we also hope to offer something of significance to a community about which we care deeply.

We are profoundly grateful for the abundance of good will, solidarity, joy, friendship, wisdom, insight, and hope that our partners — both named and unnamed — have shared with us. We especially want to recognize our colleagues at Philanthropy Together — namely Sara Lomelin, Isis Krause, and Ilyasah N. Shabazz, for their thought partnership, long hours, and camaraderie that came with this project.

We are humbled by the support, generosity, and excitement we encountered in doing this work.

In abundance,

Dr. Adriana Loson-Ceballos and Dr. Michael D. Layton  
Co-Principal Investigators



**Dr. Adriana Loson-Ceballos**

Co-founder  
Colmena-Consulting



**Dr. Michael D. Layton**

W.K. Kellogg Community Philanthropy Chair  
Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

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# Acknowledgements

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- The thought partnership of Philanthropy Together's Network Braintrust of 39 people representing 19 groups;



- The participation of 29 collective giving group leaders through focus groups;
- The 21 interviewees who shared their expertise and experience;
- The 1,406 collective giving group participants who completed the member survey;
- The 543 leaders who completed the group survey; and

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We share our gratitude with each of you and hope this research elevates the reach of this community-rooted, yet national and international, movement transforming philanthropy.

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# What is Collective Giving?

Collective giving involves individuals pooling their resources, knowledge, and networks together to support a cause collectively chosen by the group. It typically includes shared or democratic decision-making, community connections, and learning and engagement, all aimed at achieving amplified impact and empowering communities. Central to all such giving models is the practice of collective action and the cultivation of trust, where communities unite to effect change using various resources and forms of support, including Time, Talent, Treasure, Ties, and Testimony (the 5Ts).

“Giving circle” is the most common term used within the umbrella of collective giving, but there are several other models, such as chapters or affiliates of a specific network, nonprofit-led circle, and many others. (For more information, see the “Typology & Archetypes of Collective Giving Groups” section of this report.)

This glossary clarifies definitions of terms as used in this report for the collective giving ecosystem:

- **Collective Giving Groups:** Collective giving groups are made up of leaders and individual members who pool resources to support nonprofit organizations, individuals, and/or causes. (To explore existing groups, search the [Global Giving Circle Directory](#).)
- **Leaders:** Individuals who initiate or lead, host, facilitate, and, in general, keep a collective giving group running.
- **Members:** Individuals who participate in a collective giving group by contributing their resources, regardless of amount or frequency of contributions.
- **Resources:** The forms that donations can take, often referred to as the 5Ts: Time (volunteering), Talent (expertise), Treasure (money), Testimony (spreading the word), and Ties (relationships).
- **Gifts:** The donations themselves. In traditional philanthropy, these would typically be referred to as donations or grants.
- **Networks:** A community of collective giving groups with shared affinities, interests, and/or geography that provide support and resources to collective giving groups.

# Executive Summary

Philanthropy today faces many critical and complex challenges that are both uniquely urgent for our sector and grounded in wider forces beyond our control. Within this dynamic context, collective giving — a tradition observed across cultures worldwide and grounded in the ethos of community agency — has emerged as a growing force in U.S. philanthropy.

The most recent landscape survey of collective giving in the United States, published in 2017 by the Collective Giving Research Group, found that more than 150,000 philanthropists within 1,600 groups had distributed approximately \$1.29 billion through the collective giving movement (Bearman et al, 2017). While *In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving* is not a one-to-one update of that research, the growth charted from that report to this one is hugely significant:

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## BETWEEN 2017 AND 2023

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The movement is now on a trajectory to double again in the next five years, underscoring its growing appeal and potential to profoundly reshape the philanthropic landscape.

Beyond these astonishing numbers, the research shared in the following pages shows how collective giving groups are engaging everyday givers and moving resources in ways that traditional philanthropy is not. Participants are contributing not only their treasure, but also their time, talent, testimony, and ties (summed up as the “5Ts of philanthropy”) to the groups they belong to, to the nonprofits and causes those groups support, and, ultimately, to their larger communities. Overwhelmingly populated by women — and incorporating a substantial community of donors of color — these groups are intentionally supporting historically marginalized communities and community organizations, leaning in to learning as donors and individuals, and inspiring increased levels of civic action and agency.

The key actors in the philanthropic ecosystem — including collective giving group leaders and members, donors, foundations, philanthropy support organizations, and researchers — all stand to gain valuable insights from and can contribute significantly to this vibrant and expanding field.

## Methodology

The researchers made two commitments in undertaking this project: to generate research that can inform participants' own collective action and storytelling efforts; and to design research that allows for meaningful participation from a broad and inclusive range of participants. From the start, the researchers worked closely with Philanthropy Together's staff and its Braintrust — an advisory group of 20 collective giving networks representing various identities within the movement — in the development of the surveys and their subsequent dissemination.

This report is based upon original empirical data, ascertained using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data were collected from two national surveys conducted in 2023, one of collective giving group members and a second of leaders and coordinators of collective giving groups. The qualitative data were collected from five focus groups consisting of collective giving group leaders and 21 interviews with leaders of networks and collective giving infrastructure providers. The design of the study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Grand Valley State University. In compliance with their guidelines, all participants were at least 18 years of age and residents of the United States.

Based on the belief that it is critically important to understand the nature of the collective giving movement and the breadth of its diversity, the researchers used both qualitative and quantitative data for this research. To some extent, survey responses can be unrepresentative of the population from which the sample is collected. As such, the researchers sought to acknowledge and actively address this challenge by also conducting a robust collection and analysis of qualitative data gathered through focus groups and interviews.



# 1. Collective Giving is Democratizing and Diversifying Philanthropy

## 1.1 Collective giving is a rapidly expanding movement.

Between 2017 and 2023, nearly 4,000 collective giving groups mobilized approximately 370,000 philanthropists to donate more than \$3.1 billion — indicating remarkable growth in both participation and total monetary donations since the last major study of collective giving was published in 2017 (Bearman et al.). The movement is now on a trajectory to double again in the next five years, and the racial composition of new members is increasingly diverse, underscoring its growing appeal and potential to profoundly reshape the philanthropic landscape.

## 1.2 Collective giving groups are overwhelmingly led by women.

A throughline of collective giving research is the critical role that women play in the movement. Among group leaders, 84% reported that more than half of their membership consisted of women: with 60% of groups entirely composed of women, female leadership is an integral aspect of more than half of all groups. Among all groups, 43% of leaders reported that the basis of their group's identity was their identification as women. In focus groups and interviews, women shared the importance of their sense of sisterhood within giving circles, and how these spaces can foster the expansion of women's leadership in philanthropy, as well as its transformation.

## 1.3 Collective giving is actively shifting the narrative around who is considered a “philanthropist.”

With the growth of efforts to organize donor bases that mirror communities, collective giving emerges as an important approach that effectively involves donors from historically marginalized groups and communities. During the focus groups and interviews, the researchers heard time and again that it was not until donors joined their group that they embraced this identity, despite giving before becoming a member. Given their involvement in collective giving, it is not surprising that 87% of member survey respondents identified as “donors and/or philanthropists.”

## 2. Collective Giving Greatly Expands What Gets Funded

### 2.1 Collective giving groups center equity when making funding decisions.

Collective giving groups demonstrate a multifaceted approach to equity considerations, extending beyond traditional frameworks. Impressively, 60% of collective giving group leaders reported intentionally embedding racial and ethnic equity in their collective giving strategies. This commitment underscores the movement's ethos of addressing issues and communities largely overlooked by mainstream philanthropy; 80% of members cited this gap as a primary motivator for their participation in collective giving.

### 2.2 Collective giving groups give to community-based organizations.

Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents reported that their group prioritized organizations with leadership that reflects the community in which they serve, a figure that indicates groups' recognition of centering lived experience as pivotal for community change. Additionally, 83% of survey respondents said that their groups prioritized giving to organizations supporting marginalized communities and 55% support groups with budgets under \$1 million, revealing a dedication to equity and inclusion. Among collective giving groups, 35% reported supporting human rights.

### 2.3 Collective giving is deeply invested in place-based philanthropy.

A significant majority of survey respondents' groups (93%) drew members from a single locale or state. A localized approach is evident across funding activities, as well: 70% of leaders reported that their funds stay in their home state, and nearly half of all respondents (47%) reported making grants within the same city, town, or county.

## 3. Collective Giving Pushes the Bounds of How Philanthropy is Practiced

### 3.1 Collective giving changes what counts as “giving,” harnessing all 5Ts.

Collective giving embraces all 5Ts — Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimony, and Ties — not just Treasure. Respondents reported making additional significant contributions of non-monetary resources to both their group and its recipients (91% and 66% respectively). Participants volunteered their Time and Talent within their groups and supported organizations, fostered Ties by strategically connecting both to their networks, and offered Testimony by advocating for their group and its beneficiaries.

### 3.2 Collective giving is emerging as a promising space for donor education and organizing.

Collective giving groups showcase a sustained commitment to donor education and philanthropic impact. While there is room for growth in specialized areas, like advocacy and leadership training, collective giving groups play an especially crucial role in enhancing members’ understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion: 77% of members reported a positive impact in their learning in these areas.

### 3.3 Collective giving groups practice trust-based philanthropy.

Collective giving as a grassroots philanthropic practice has tended toward trust-based models, and the philanthropic field’s growing attention on trust-based philanthropy has inspired more groups to refine their practices. A significant 72% of these groups provided general operating support, a departure from the more restricted funding approaches which can characterize traditional philanthropy and a key pillar of trust-based practice.

## 4. Collective Giving Deeply Impacts Members Themselves

### 4.1 Collective giving improves members' health, wellness, and agency.

Alongside reported improvements in wellness, respondents reported improved feelings of personal agency in their communities as a result of their group participation; 77% expressed an increased belief in their social influence and feeling that their voices mattered on social issues. Physically, mentally, and/or spiritually, 55% experienced a positive impact on their ability to lead healthy lives.

### 4.2 Collective giving groups foster belonging, purpose, and connection to community.

Engaging in collective giving fosters a profound sense of purpose and fulfillment derived from collaborative efforts; 82% of members joined looking to build relationships with others who share similar values and/or identities. Ninety-one percent of respondents reported a positive impact in their sense of belonging to a community.

### 4.3 Collective giving enhances members' professional pursuits.

Respondents indicated that participation in collective giving groups served as a catalyst for professional development, aligning members' career pursuits with their values and aspirations. Notably, over 61% of survey respondents were professionally affiliated with the social change field, and 46% said a top benefit of participation was expanding and/or strengthening their networks.

## 5. Collective Giving is a Catalyst for Social Cohesion and Change

### 5.1 Collective giving groups act as “schools of democracy.”

Collective giving serves as an opportunity for democratic engagement, with groups functioning as “schools of democracy.” Notably, 27% of groups made granting decisions through consensus, while 53% operated based on majority rules. In addition, 53% of respondents reported a positive impact on their ability to engage in discussions with dissenting voices, underscoring the role of collective giving in fostering robust civic discourse.

### 5.2 Collective giving fosters bonds within groups and bridges across communities.

Collective giving groups can facilitate the creation of social capital (understood as connections of reciprocity and trust), both within communities and between them. Communities can be constituted by a shared place, a common identity, or both. Shared identities among members also play a pivotal role in collective giving, as 77% of groups acknowledged a common affiliation or identity among their members. Giving circle leaders shared stories about how their identity-based groups connected with both the larger community and with other marginalized communities, their generosity and engagement creating bridges of mutual support and understanding.

### 5.3 Collective giving spurs deeper levels of civic engagement.

A significant 59% of members reported that their participation in collective giving increased their advocacy for issues that matter to them personally and 25% reported donating more often to parties and campaigns, indicating a heightened sense of civic responsibility and activism. Additionally, 25% of groups reported that they provided advocacy or civic engagement opportunities, facilitating and fostering civic engagement in societal issues and the political process.



# Introduction

Collective giving, a tradition observed across various cultures worldwide, epitomizes the ethos of people coming together to affect change. From *tandas* in Mexico to *gehs* in Korea and *sou sous* in West African countries, the collective giving model has historically served as a cornerstone of community generosity, supporting family, friends, and the community itself (Bearman, 2007; Eikenberry, 2006). In the United States, this practice has blossomed into a model of community-based giving that has experienced a significant surge in popularity over the last two decades (Bearman et al., 2017), with early research focusing on the key role of women in giving circles (Shaw-Hardy, 2005).

Philanthropy today faces many critical and complex challenges that are both uniquely urgent for our sector and grounded in wider forces beyond our control. Historic inflation, pandemic-era economic stress, and a general sense of powerlessness are intersecting with a decline in the number of households giving (Rooney, 2019) and volunteering (Dietz & Grimm, 2023). Megadonors are simultaneously pouring billions of dollars into nonprofit causes and prompting concerns about drastically shifting the balance of power (Johnson, 2021). And a new era of racial reckoning and awareness is driving demands for meaningful change in both public and private spaces, even as a range of court decisions and state and federal legislation enter the equation. Philanthropy — alongside countless individuals, institutions, and networks in the U.S. and abroad — is wrestling with what it will mean, and what it will take, to truly embrace principles of equity, inclusion, and justice in their work (Mercado, 2023).

Within this context, collective giving has emerged as a growing force in the philanthropic sector. Since 2001, thousands of collective giving groups have galvanized hundreds of thousands of philanthropists to collectively contribute billions of dollars to various causes. And the movement is speeding up: data shared in this report demonstrate that new participation rates have more than doubled every five years since the turn of the millennium.

The last major study of collective giving was published in 2017 by the Collective Giving Research Group. *The Landscape of Giving Circles/Collective Giving Groups in the U.S.* found that more than 150,000 people within 1,600 groups had participated in collective giving, jointly moving \$1.29 billion into communities across the country since their inception (Bearman et al., 2017). *In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving in the U.S.* builds on this initial knowledge base to demonstrate the tremendous growth of this movement: between 2017 and 2023, nearly 4,000 collective giving groups mobilized approximately 370,000 philanthropists to donate more than \$3.1 billion — indicating more than 140% growth in both participation and total monetary donations in a third of the timeframe. Based on these findings, the movement is now on a trajectory to double again in the next five years, cementing its place as a force to be reckoned with in the philanthropic landscape.

The growth of the movement is only one part of the story: collective giving is redefining the notions of who can be a “philanthropist,” moving the narrative beyond the stereotypical image of a wealthy white man, and expanding what philanthropy entails to something more than writing checks (Layton, 2022). This aspect of the movement may be particularly impactful for marginalized communities who find their voices amplified and their experiences validated through collective giving. Practices of mutual aid among communities of color especially are longstanding but are not often viewed as “philanthropy” (Heist et al., 2022; Layton, 2016; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). Yet, it is often those from marginalized communities who are at the forefront of emerging trends in the sector (Spicer, 2022). Collective giving presents a notable opportunity to engage and recognize donors of color, whose perspectives and experiences are often overlooked in traditional philanthropic conversations.



**When I was introduced more formally to collective giving, it shifted my mindset from a place of scarcity to abundance.**

... Even if there's a visceral response to the fallback of, 'I don't have enough.' No, even this contribution that you're making is going to make an impact. The biggest for me has been that mindset shift and the psychology around wealth and giving, and my ability to be a part of the process and contribute more."

– Imani Missouri, [DIFFvelopment](#)



An additional critical facet of this movement is the fact that it is overwhelmingly women-led at a time when \$30 trillion in assets is moving into the hands of women (Ascent Private Capital Management of U.S. Bank, 2023). Banducci (2005) noted nearly two decades ago why women are at the forefront of this form of giving. The “prevailing culture of women is relational,” she wrote, going on to urge an appreciation of

The power of women to bring other women into the giving of time, talent, and treasure. In the grantor domain, the spontaneous growth of giving circles demonstrates the chemistry of growth-in-connection and the relational effectiveness when women get together in groups to support a cause rather than contributing independently. (p. 43)

The growth of this movement and the diversity of its participants is also meshing with a demonstrated focus on equity among group members and a desire by members to focus on issues overlooked by institutional philanthropy. This intentionality reflects the types of organizations receiving funding — often smaller, community-based organizations — and a place-based ethos wherein groups drawn from a given geographic community also fund within that geography. Similarly, the formation of collective giving groups based on shared identity can serve as a connection between traditional philanthropic practices and faith, such as *zakat* for Muslims and *tzedakah* for Jews. Giving “by and for communities” blurs the lines between giver and recipient, increasing representational philanthropy for issues and communities often left on the margins of philanthropic investments.

Furthermore, the emphasis on applying an equity lens has impacted the very ways collective giving groups practice their philanthropy. Global calls for philanthropy to focus on trust-based practices have already been well received within the collective giving community, where decades

of giving traditions approach philanthropy differently across all “5Ts.” “We’ve always done it this way” was a common refrain heard by the researchers. Beyond the Treasure these groups give, they also give Time, Talent, Testimony, and Ties.

Compared with most other forms of traditional philanthropy, where giving is done largely at an individual level, collective giving is inherently a social, long-term, and community-based experience. The theory of change behind collective giving and research points to the impact on the *individual* participating and on the *groups being funded*. For example, collective giving has an important impact upon the philanthropic and civic engagement of participants (Carboni & Eikenberry, 2018; Carboni & Eikenberry, 2021; Eikenberry, 2006). And, while anecdotally, participants have long known the impact that collective giving has upon them personally, Loson-Ceballos (2022) explored how membership in a giving circle enhances personal wellness. The questions used in the qualitative research in that work informed both the survey research and qualitative instruments in this report.

The agency and purpose derived from participation then paves the path to civic engagement beyond the self to benefit the greater whole. This report makes frequent references to the concepts of bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the development of relationships and feelings of reciprocity within a group or community. Bridging social capital refers to the development of those ties across different groups or communities (Claridge, 2018). Together, these terms offer a means of understanding how philanthropy and the public can begin to address the many challenges society faces — and highlight how collective giving can and is already contributing to improved social cohesion and inclusivity. Across this research, members reported cultivating a sense of solidarity and empowerment with one another and with the nonprofits and the causes their groups support, finding pride and agency in their collective efforts toward positive change. By engaging donors of color and other marginalized groups, and by often prioritizing grantees that support traditionally underfunded communities and causes, collective giving is building both bonding and bridging social capital and expanding philanthropy’s scope and impact.



One of the last giving circle meetings I attended, everybody was in the same room, all the donors, all the folks presenting from every organization, we listened to each other, we ate food together, we laughed so much and yes, we drank wine together. And then we got to sharing the stories. **It felt like there was no scarcity in the room, there was just abundance!** An abundance of power, passion, solutions. And lots of tears because there is deep pain and suffering happening in our communities. The money wasn’t the most important thing in the room, the people were. This is where philanthropy goes wrong. Mainstream philanthropy is so devoid of joy, of that sense of real abundance and trust! If there is no trust, or joy, then the money feels ugly, everything goes back to a financial transaction instead of a deep human connection”

– Masha V. Chernyak,  
Former Senior Vice President,  
[Latino Community Foundation](#)



As spaces for democratic practice have dwindled across America in recent decades, avenues for cultivating essential civic skills become increasingly scarce (Skocpol, 2003; Putnam & Garrett, 2020). It is within this context that participation in collective giving groups emerges as an opportunity to exercise democratic decision-making and to cultivate a sense of solidarity and empowerment both with one another and with the nonprofits and the causes their groups support. Members report finding pride and agency in their collective efforts toward positive change.

As collective giving continues to evolve and grow as a movement — amidst and beyond the vastly changing context and challenges facing the world — it has the potential to profoundly reshape the philanthropic landscape — from who is recognized as a “philanthropist,” to the organizations and causes that get funded, to how the funding flows. But far beyond philanthropy, collective giving may be one of the rare ways to rebuild the very social fabric of our country toward a connective, active, and engaged society changing their communities for the better. In abundance, this work has already begun.



# Methodology

The researchers made two firm commitments in undertaking this project: first, to produce research that can inform the participants' own collective action and storytelling efforts; second, to create and execute a research design that would ensure meaningful participation from as diverse and inclusive a range of participants as possible. From the start, the researchers worked closely with Philanthropy Together's staff and its Braintrust in the development of the surveys and their dissemination.

This report is based upon original empirical data, which were ascertained using both quantitative and qualitative methods. (For a more detailed discussion of the methodology, see Appendix A.) The quantitative data comes from two national surveys conducted in early 2023: one of leaders and coordinators of collective giving groups, with 543 completed surveys (see Appendix B); and a second survey of present and former collective giving group members, of whom 1,406 completed the survey (see Appendix C). (Findings on member characteristics from the member survey can be found in Appendix D.) The qualitative data came from 21 interviews with leaders of networks and infrastructure providers conducted in December 2023 and January 2024 (see Appendix E) and five focus groups consisting of 29 collective giving group leaders that were held in December 2023 (see Appendix F). (For a timeline of activities, see Appendix G.)

The design of this study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Grand Valley State University. In compliance with their guidelines, all participants were at least 18 years of age and residents of the United States. All personal data gathered has been safeguarded along with the anonymity of participants: the one exception is that any participant who is quoted in the text has reviewed and approved the quotation, as well as the manner in which they are identified. The researchers also compiled an extensive list of collective giving groups in the U.S., not only to inform recruitment of study participants, but also in an ambitious attempt to identify as many of the currently existing groups as possible in order to estimate the size of the movement, its membership, and the financial resources mobilized since the last landscape study was conducted and published in 2017. (For a detailed discussion, please see Appendix H.)



Through a combined analysis of member and group leader survey data (as discussed in Appendix A: Methodology), the researchers explored the multifaceted dimensions of collective giving shedding light on race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability, and other demographic characteristics. However, the data also highlight the difficulties in capturing the full diversity of collective giving groups, particularly among marginalized communities, through quantitative surveys alone. While both surveys in this research sought demographic information, for the member survey this implied self-reporting, but for leaders this meant reporting on behalf of the members of their groups. In the absence of self-reported data collection, the persons responding to the group survey might have been unwilling to assume that they knew how their members identified. Consequently, the contributions of some identity groups to collective giving initiatives may be under- or over-represented. To proactively address these challenges, the researchers collected and analyzed qualitative data gathered through focus groups and interviews in order to more holistically understand the nature and diversity of the collective giving movement.





## A CLOSER LOOK

# Typology & Archetypes of Collective Giving Groups

This typology is intended to serve as an overview to the variety of ways that collective giving groups organize themselves. As the movement has grown, a number of specific models and methodologies for operating have emerged. Given the scope of the field as it stands today, it was imperative to explore a typology of collective giving groups that could serve as a guide to the sector and as an organizing framework for new potential collective giving groups. Isis Krause, chief strategy officer at Philanthropy Together, who has been working with collective giving groups since 2013, developed the following typology and archetypes informed by this research and overarching field knowledge. This framework offers a conceptualization of the variety of models of collective giving groups.

Definitionally, collective giving entails a group of values-aligned people who gather together, give, and collectively decide where their gift goes. They often engage above and beyond their gift for amplified impact. Like most types of civil society organizations, collective giving groups have a diverse array of operational structures and processes, reflecting a diversity of size, age, and composition. Collective giving groups choose among a range of options in their organizational forms and processes, typically emphasizing flexibility, strategy, and impactful support to organizations striving to make a difference in their communities. This typology, therefore, focuses on three core aspects of a collective giving group:

1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group
2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients
3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

Each of these dimensions can then be further understood by exploring seven key characteristics — themselves displayed as ranges — capturing the kinds of choices that collective giving groups make within each dimension in organizing their work. The characteristics listed on each end of a spectrum aim to show the clearest distinctions between two orientations, as reflected in the research data and from field experience, but many groups fall in the middle and can change over time.

Understanding these dimensions provides a clearer picture of the collective giving movement and the diversity of individual groups and networks that compose it. Some of the key findings from this research are included to correspond with key facets of the typology in order to illustrate the prevalence of different characteristics.

# 1. Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group

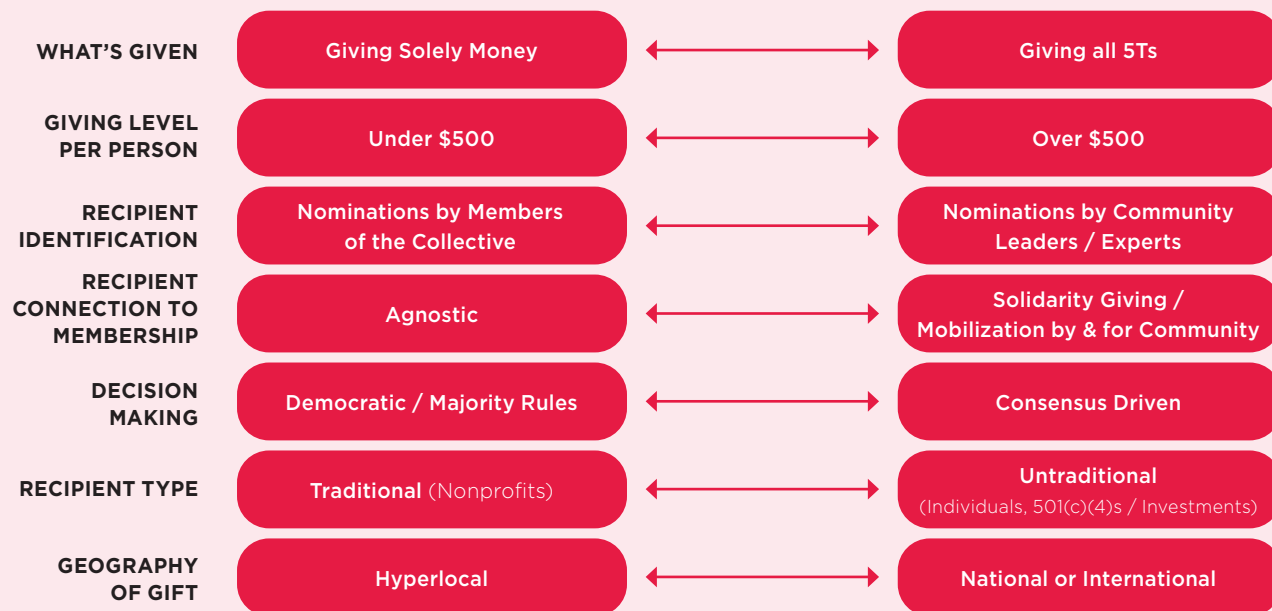
Figure 1: Who and Why: Membership Characteristics and Purpose of the Group



- **Community:** Many groups emphasize a sense of belonging (e.g., 74% of participants joined to form connections within their community), while others seek to network for a cause.
- **Membership Inclusion:** 58% of groups drew members from the same locale and 77% reported a shared identity (gender, race, religion, profession, etc.). Others purposefully span multiple identities.
- **Origin:** Most groups are created independently, often drawing from a specific community, but 7% were groups led by and serving specific nonprofits.
- **Size of Group:** 34% of groups had less than 25 members (good for consensus decision-making and relationship building) and 38% had more than 100 members (good for networking).
- **Source of Gift:** Almost all members give individually — 95% reported donations to their own groups over the past 12 months. Donor organizing is a particular focus for some — 18% fundraise additionally for their collective giving group and 13% fundraise on behalf of their group’s recipients.
- **Learning:** Many groups offer learning opportunities to their members — from educational workshops to site visits, guest speakers, and more. 77% of members reported a positive impact on their learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Impact intention:** A commitment to “change not charity” is shared by 80% of participating collective giving group members, citing their desire to address issues and communities overlooked by mainstream philanthropy. Others tend to support more traditional, service-oriented nonprofits.

## 2. What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients

Figure 2: What and Where: Giving Focus, Levels, Decision-Making, and Recipients



- **What's Given:** 60% of members reported an increase in time volunteered. Two-thirds reported making additional non-monetary contributions to their groups' grant recipients.
- **Giving Level, Per Person:** Groups reported that 50% of members make annual contributions on average below \$500.
- **Recipient Identification:** 34% asked their members to find and/or nominate potential recipients, 16% researched potential recipients, and 10% had nominations from community leaders and/or experts.
- **Recipient Connection to Membership:** 70% of groups identified serving the same communities from which their members came as important in selecting funding recipients.
- **Decision-Making:** 53% of groups operated based on majority rule, while 27% of groups made funding decisions through consensus. A smaller number delegated decision-making to a committee or host organization.
- **Recipient Type:** 95% of groups funded nonprofit organizations (501(c)(3)s), while informal groups and/or movement efforts are funded by 10% of groups.
- **Geography of Gift:** A preponderance of groups funded within their city/town/county, with smaller percentages funding nationally (5%) or internationally (2%).

### 3. How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports

Figure 3: How and When: Processes, Structures, and Supports



- Longevity:** Some groups operated as a one-time collective giving experience, some were time-bound efforts. Most groups reflected long-term efforts — average length of membership is 7.5 years. 52% meet once a year to make grant decisions, and 26% meet quarterly.
- Giving Approach:** Collective giving groups engaged in a mix of frameworks, including both “strategic philanthropy” and “trust-based philanthropy.” 72% offered general operating and/or unrestricted funding, while 63% focused on project or program support.
- Host Influence:** The majority of groups own decision-making themselves, but for 2% of groups, decisions were made by the host organization and/or network.
- Governance:** 52% had a host organization, 22% were part of a network, and 7% were affiliated with a nonprofit. The connection to a host can influence the group’s decision-making.
- Money Management:** 45% of collective giving groups were hosted by either a community foundation or women’s fund, which managed donations and disbursements; technology platforms have also emerged as an accessible, low-cost alternative (24%).
- Staffing:** 47% of groups had paid-staff support, indicating a dedicated resource allocated to manage operations, while the remainder were run by volunteers.
- Meeting Format:** 35% of groups primarily meet in person, while 43% opted for a hybrid format (in-person and online), and 22% exclusively meet online.

## Developing Archetypes of Collective Giving Groups from the Typology

Looking across the field of collective giving, a set of archetypal models have emerged. In the following section the seven common archetypes that have dozens or even hundreds of groups aligned to that model are explored. Key aspects of each archetype — based on survey responses — are plotted on the typology framework to provide a shorthand of these groups' characteristics.

These archetypes are meant to describe common features; individual collective giving groups likely differ on any one of the typology characteristics as this grassroots model makes each group unique. As collective giving models and philanthropy as a sector continue to rapidly expand and morph in form and function, the following is a snapshot of the current archetypes that are most prominent today. The archetypes include, in no particular order:

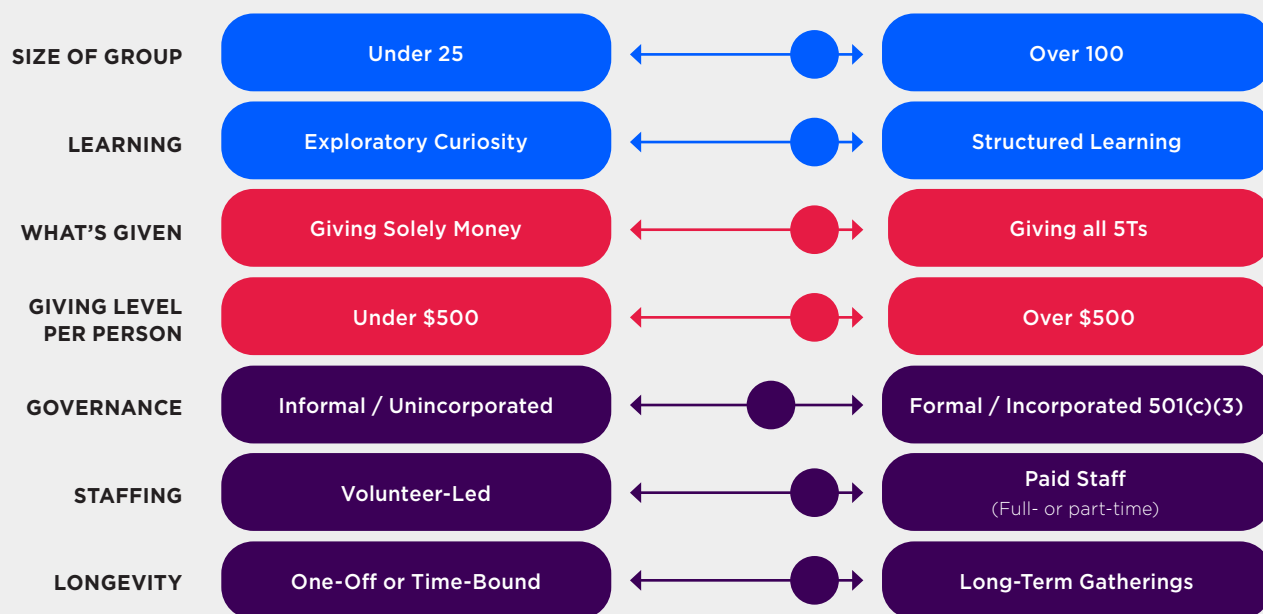
1. **Women Giving Big**
2. **Crowd Granting Networks**
3. **Belonging Through Identity Groups**
4. **Organizing for Social Change Groups**
5. **Community Project Micro-Granting**
6. **Live Crowdfunding Experiences**
7. **Host-Supporting Groups**

New Generation of African American Philanthropists (NGAAP) // Photo Credit: Alvin C. Jacobs, Jr.



## ARCHETYPE 1: WOMEN GIVING BIG

Figure 4: Key Typology Mapping for Women Giving Big

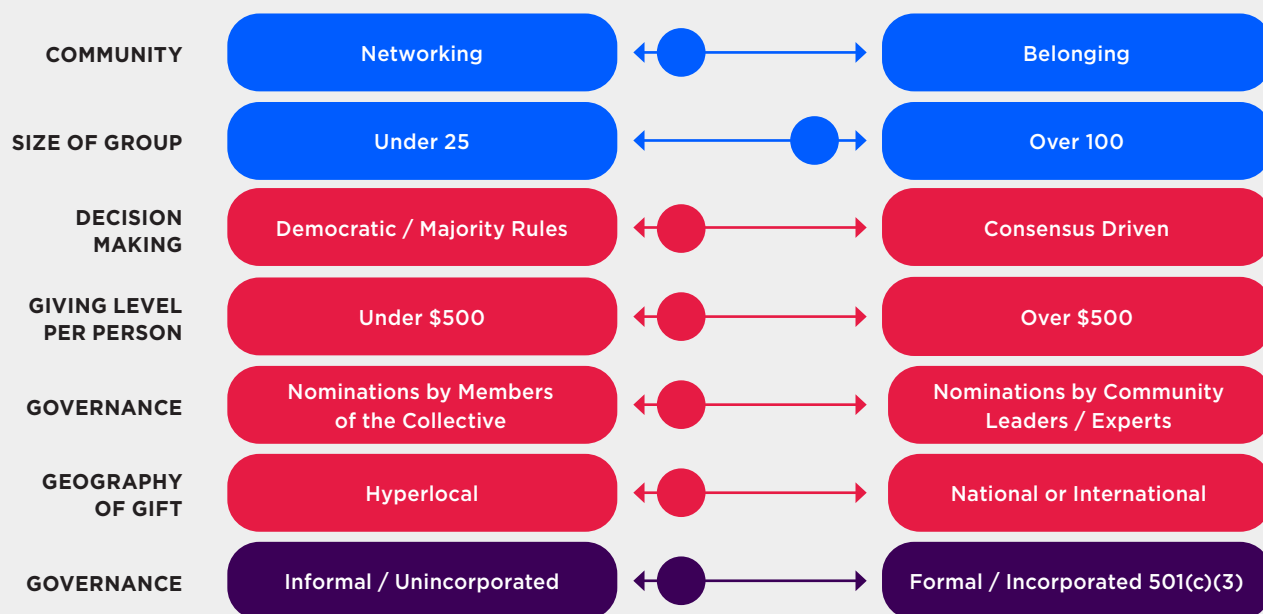


**Women Giving Big** is one of the earliest forms of collective giving groups, profiled in 2005 research on collective giving (Banducci, 2005). In this model, larger communities of often more than 100 women come together and form a new collective giving community. Members tend to give \$1,000 or more a year (though pushes for inclusivity are removing required minimums), equating to larger pooled gift amounts for nonprofits. The women also tend to volunteer, join boards, and advocate for the nonprofits they fund. Given the higher-dollar collective gift made, these groups tend to focus on strategic giving, though many are pushing trust-based philanthropy practices (Trust-Based Philanthropy Project, n.d.). These groups often have some paid-staff support and some are incorporated as independent 501(c)(3)s. This formality enables long-term impact through active succession planning of leaders, though it also brings a layer of complexity and administrative obligation, which may in some instances limit flexibility. The **Impact100** model and the network **Philanos** operate dozens of groups in this archetype all over the U.S. and in select countries globally. **Together Women Rise** has a particular focus on international investments. **Invest for Better** is applying this approach through a social enterprise lens.

Impact 100 Cincinnati

## ARCHETYPE 2: CROWD GRANTING NETWORKS

Figure 5: Key Typology Mapping for Crowd Granting Networks



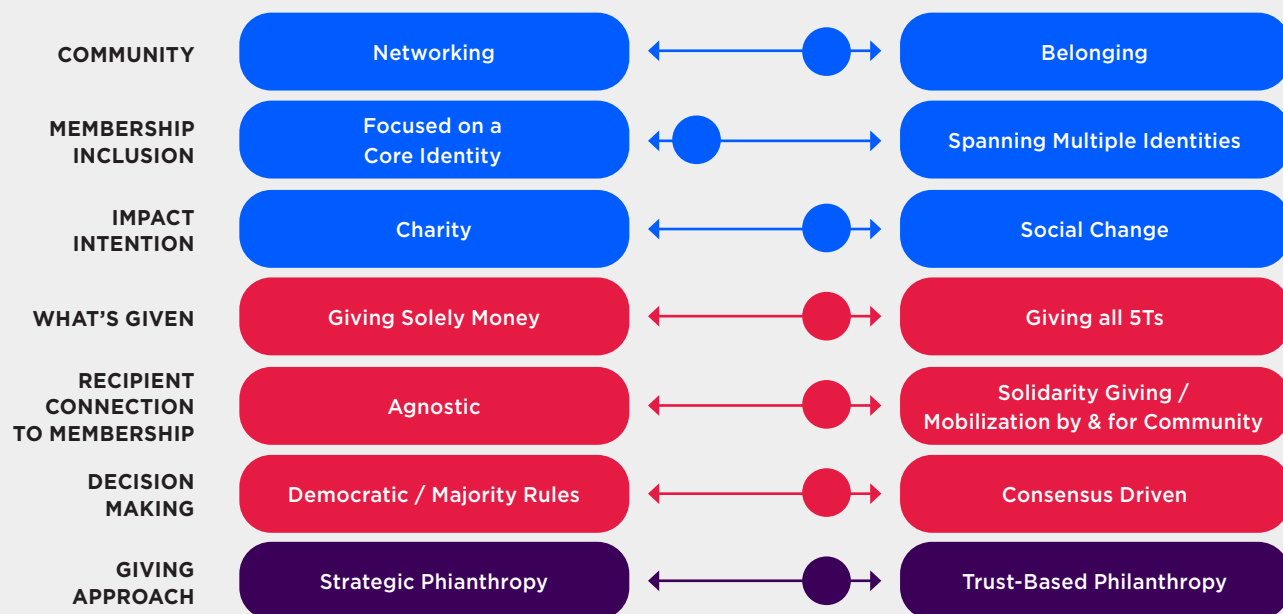
**Crowd Granting Networks** are one of the most common models of collective giving. **100 Who Care Alliance** and **Grapevine Giving Network** have popularized this approach, where 100 or more members come together, each giving \$100/quarter (for a total of \$400 annually). Members nominate nonprofits and then select grantees through a majority vote. These relatively informal collective giving groups give without any strings attached to the nonprofits selected, and most often give locally. Rather than drawing on a pre-existing community, they create a group that focuses on networking with new contacts for a shared cause.

Metro Phoenix Women for Good



## ARCHETYPE 3: BELONGING THROUGH IDENTITY GROUPS

Figure 6: Key Typology Mapping for Belonging Through Identity Groups



**Belonging Through Identity Groups** are representative of the many diverse collective giving groups that create belonging for a particular identity — often those historically marginalized — such as race/ethnicity or minority faiths. These groups are often small. Members often give all 5Ts and give specifically to groups that mirror their identity (e.g., a Black women’s collective giving group giving to Black-led and -serving organizations focused on women and girls). Given the tight focus on identity and belonging, members often meet in person and have a strong emphasis on building trust and relationships with the groups they fund.

Networks aligned by race/ethnicity include **Community Investment Network**, **AAPIP Giving Circle Network**, and **Latino Giving Circle Network® at the Latino Community Foundation**; groups organized by faith include **Amplifier** and **Honeycomb** (Jewish values-inspired giving circle networks), and **American Muslim Community Foundation**. A tight geographic focus can also act as a form of identity cohesion, such as **Giving Project Vermont** and the many local collective giving groups that are hosted by a community foundation. Another subset of groups under this archetype are **family giving circles**, which create space for family connection, intergenerational learning, and, often, healing.

Latino Giving Circle Network® // Photo Credit: Bryan Patrick for Latino Community Foundation



## ARCHETYPE 4: ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE GROUPS

Figure 7: Key Typology Mapping for Organizing for Social Change Groups



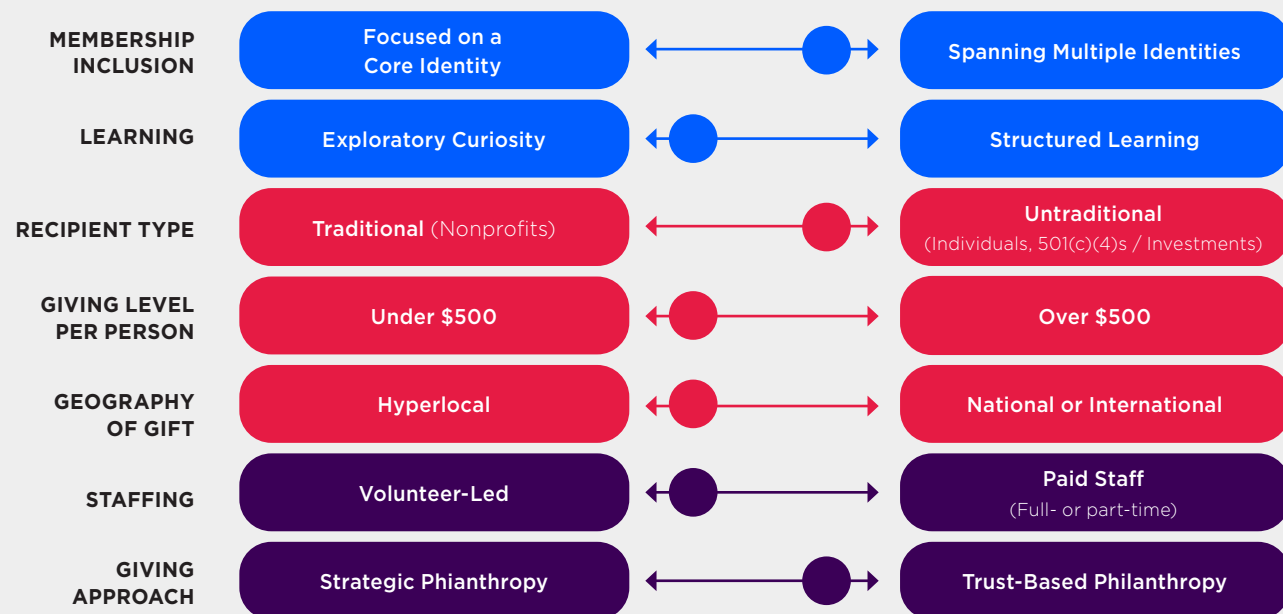
**Organizing for Social Change Groups** have a primary focus on using their collective gifts and efforts for social transformation, with a focus on equity, justice, and shifting power. These groups often purposefully bring together a collective that spans multiple identities (e.g., across race/ethnicity, class, age), engage in structured learning or experiences (often led by paid facilitators), and aim to mobilize giving from individuals and groups beyond their immediate membership. These groups often give beyond the standard nonprofit structure to emerging leaders or 501(c)(4) groups leading policy change efforts, and fund with the highest standard of trust-based philanthropy practice. Funding decisions are commonly made by community leaders rather than group members. The **Giving Project Network**, **Social Venture Partners International**, the **States Project**, and the **Social Justice Giving Circle Project** are example networks. There are also many examples of independent giving circles like **CoThinkk**, **Radfund**, or **Vital Little Plans** that align with this archetype.

Radfund



## ARCHETYPE 5: COMMUNITY PROJECT MICRO-GRANTING

Figure 8: Key Typology Mapping for Community Project Micro-Granting



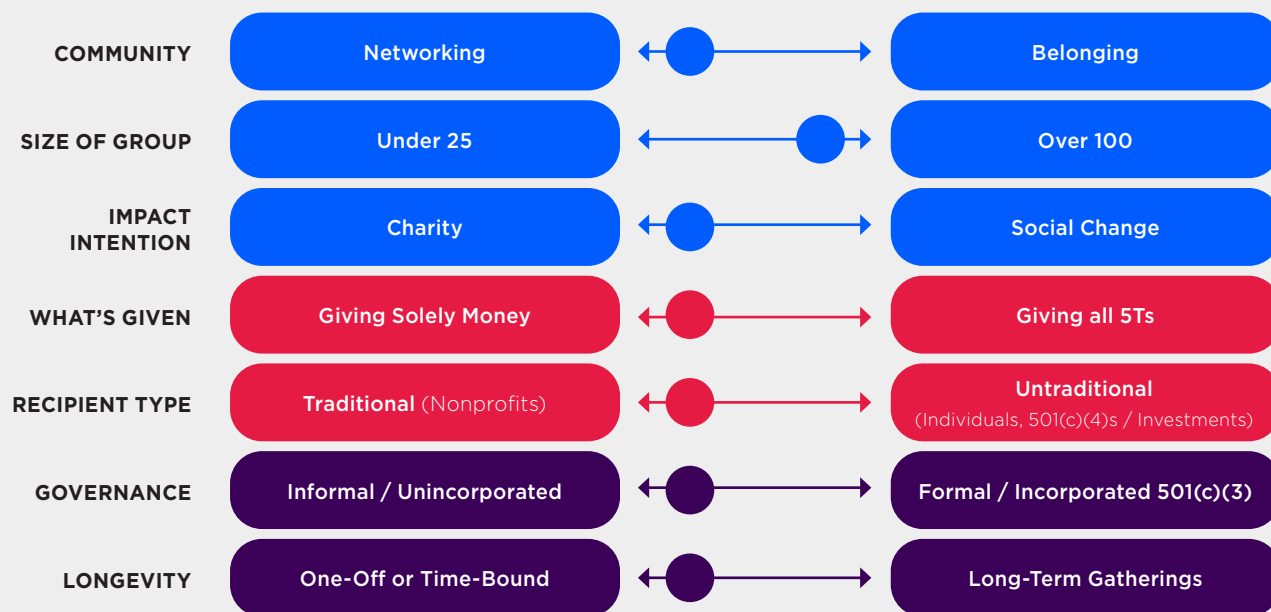
**Community Project Micro-Granting** groups focus on community projects, seed creative ideas, art projects, and emerging leaders — all with the express intention of supporting those outside the traditional nonprofit structure. Groups most often include members eager to learn about new and creative ideas in their community and each member gives a modest personal donation. These groups are informal in structure, and given how far outside the nonprofit structure they typically operate, their giving is particularly rooted in trust and community connection. The **Awesome Foundation** and **Sunday Soup** are two networks leading in this approach.

The Awesome Foundation



## ARCHETYPE 6: LIVE CROWDFUNDING EXPERIENCES

Figure 9: Key Typology Mapping for Live Crowdfunding Experiences



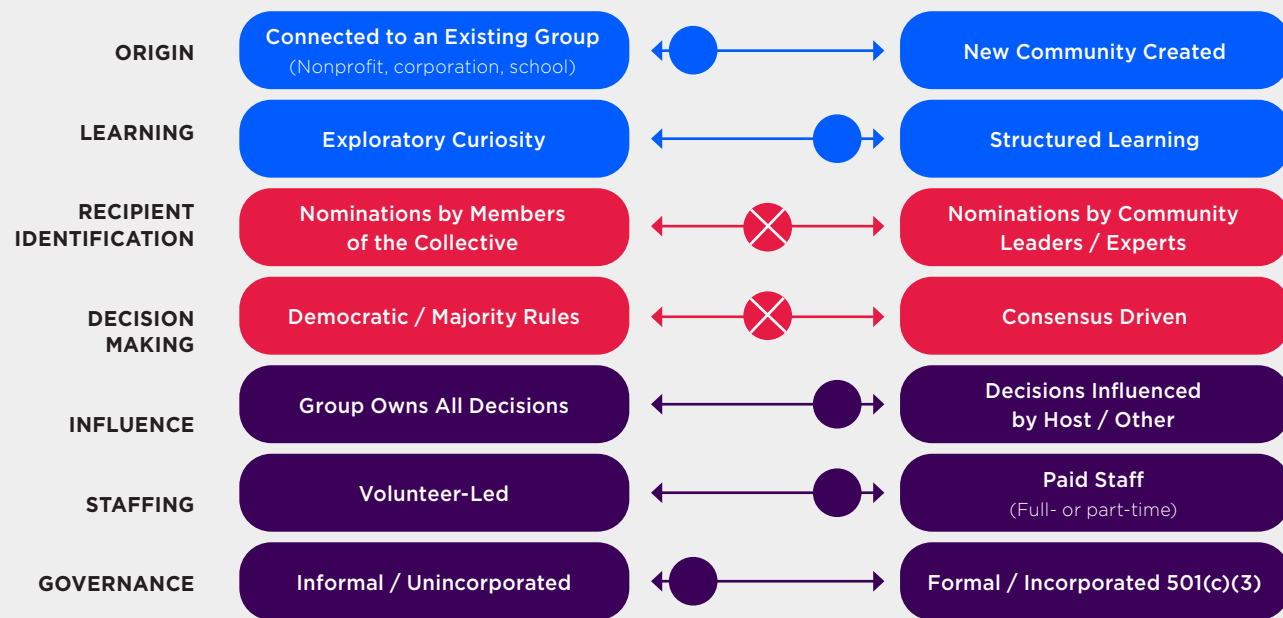
**Live Crowdfunding Experiences** are typically formed as one-off events that bring together large groups of people for in-the-moment giving. Participants are often asked for monetary gifts during the event and are not expected to come together as a giving group again. These convenings are informal and often use a technology platform to facilitate giving. **Amplifier** innovated the “pop up giving circle” model where you run through the core aspects of a giving circle in just a few hours, and **The Funding Network**, a network in the U.K., focuses exclusively on these live crowdfunding events. University instructors are also using this model to introduce students to the giving circle model. Valparaiso University in Indiana and Grand Valley State University in Michigan are two examples.

The Funding Network // Photo Credit: Chris Ison



## ARCHETYPE 7: HOST-SUPPORTING GROUPS

Figure 10: Key Typology Mapping for Host-Supporting Groups



**Host-Supporting Groups** are created by an existing entity looking to fundraise or build community. These groups are most often created by nonprofits, alumni associations, chapter-based organizations, women’s funds, or corporations. Given the intimate connection to an existing organization, the focus of this model of collective giving is less on the group itself identifying and democratically deciding what to fund (hence the crossed out elements of the typology above), and is instead more about a structured learning experience and fundraising opportunity for the host. Most often these groups leverage the governance, fiscal structures, and paid staff of the host to start, lead, and run the group.

There are not yet networks of these “**host-supporting groups**,” but there are hundreds of examples. Sometimes called “**Friends Of**” or “**Fundraising Societies**,” many of these groups are now expanding from passive fundraising efforts to more community-focused groups to create stronger connections between the host and its supporters.

DIFFvelopment Program Alumni





WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE OF HOWARD COUNTY

#### KEY FINDING 1

## Collective Giving is Democratizing and Diversifying Philanthropy

# 1. Collective Giving is Democratizing and Diversifying Philanthropy

This section analyzes how much the collective giving movement has grown in the U.S., the role of women at the forefront of this growth, and how participants are reshaping the definition of “philanthropy.” Collective giving is cementing itself as a powerful tool for meaningful philanthropic engagement, reflecting a growing desire for inclusivity and impact as it strives to organize donor bases that mirror communities.

“

**We are firm believers in democratizing philanthropy.** We see this as an avenue for people to give within their social networks to causes that they love to support ...and mobilizing American Muslim power through philanthropy, to showcase the causes that American Muslims care about, and also giving them a vehicle to give more strategically and collaboratively.”

– Muhi Khwaja, Co-Founder & Chief Development Officer, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)



“

One of the shifts within these giving circles, and particularly for African American women and girls giving circles, is that **we find ourselves as donors and philanthropists before we knew what philanthropy was. We only thought that Warren Buffett was a philanthropist or MacKenzie Scott. We are philanthropists in our own right.**

... To be able to redefine ourselves in a collective way is important. When I try to recruit other women to join the circle, and I say, ‘Your \$500, \$1,100, it’s good. But imagine if you did that with 30 other women?’ And so they started rethinking the power of giving and the power of collective giving.”

– Jill C. Coleman, Endowment Chair and Past Chair, [SisterFund](#)



## 1.1 Collective giving is a rapidly expanding movement.

The numbers are truly awe-inspiring. Between 2017-2023, nearly 4,000 groups mobilized approximately 370,000 philanthropists to donate more than \$3.1 billion collectively in the U.S. — demonstrating the audacious potential of this movement to strategically harness and amplify philanthropy across communities. (See Appendix H: Calculating the Scale of the Movement, for more information.) Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, these numbers show significant growth in collective giving, as the 2016 Landscape of U.S. Giving Circles and Collective Giving Groups (Bearman et al., 2017), which used a methodology distinct from this research, estimated that about 1,600 giving circles with approximately 150,000 members had donated approximately \$1.29 billion since their inception.



**I think everyone should be in a giving circle. If not two, or three.** I think that's the future that we could see [but we] need to raise more awareness."

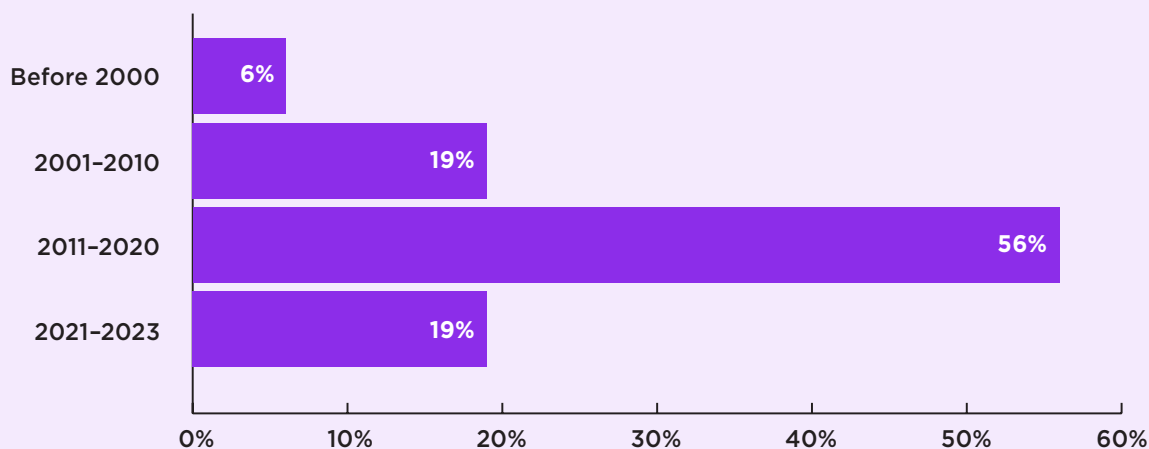
– Emily Rasmussen,  
Founder & CEO, [Grapevine](#)



### History: Establishment Year of Groups and Tenure of Members

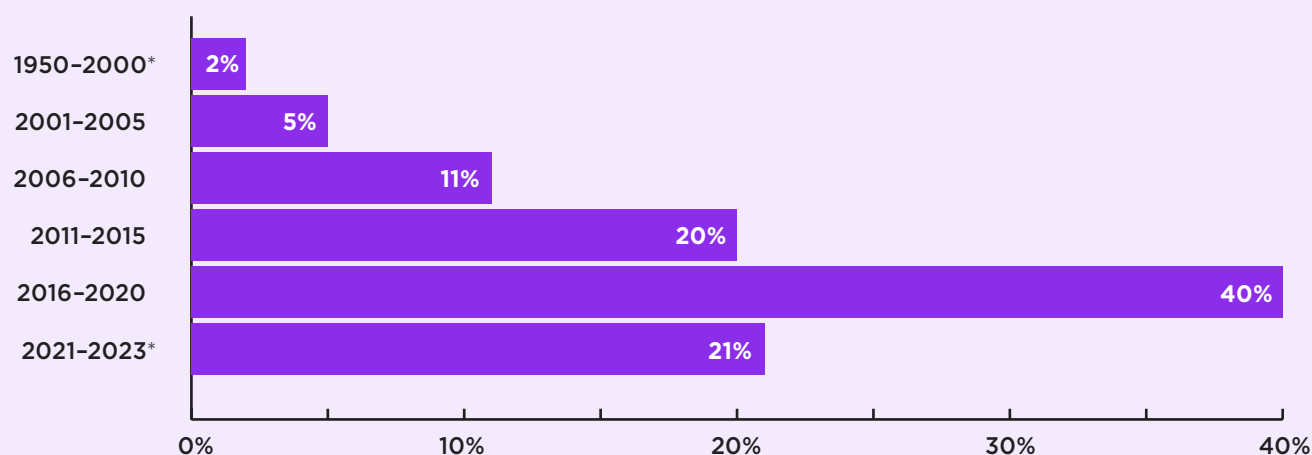
The turn of the 21st century marked a key inflection point in the emergence of collective giving groups in the U.S. Only 6% of surveyed groups formed before 2000. A majority of groups surveyed were established between 2011-2020 (56%). An equal percentage of leaders (19%) reported forming their groups during the preceding decade (2001-2010) and between 2021-2023 (essentially 2.5 years), reflecting sustained momentum and continued expansion of the movement.

**Figure 11: Year Collective Giving Groups Started**



The responses to the member survey show notable acceleration in membership. Only 2% of individual respondents reported joining before 2000. The percentage of respondents who reported joining groups doubled every five years beginning in 2001, with 61% joining since 2016. The movement is on a trajectory to double again in the next five years, and it is growing in diversity. From 2016 to 2019, 17% of the respondents who joined a giving circle identified as a person of color: from 2020 to 2023, the percentage rose to 27%, an increase of nearly 60%.

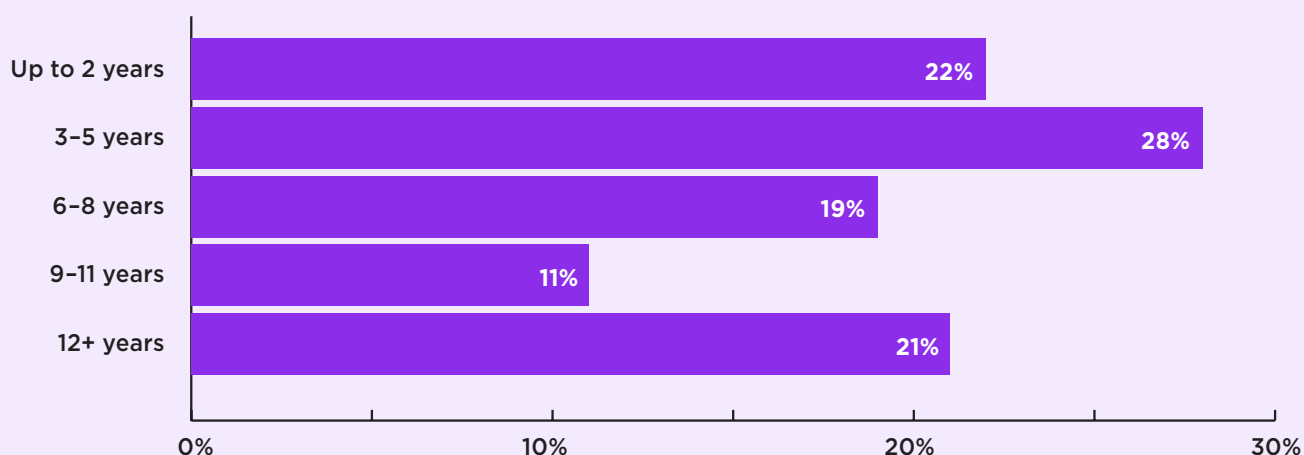
**Figure 12: Year That a Member First Joined a Group**



\*Note: Most time periods cover five years, except the first one (five decades) and the last one (three years).

The average length of membership among respondents is 7.5 years, indicating a substantial commitment and engagement to values, groups, and philanthropy within the collective giving community.

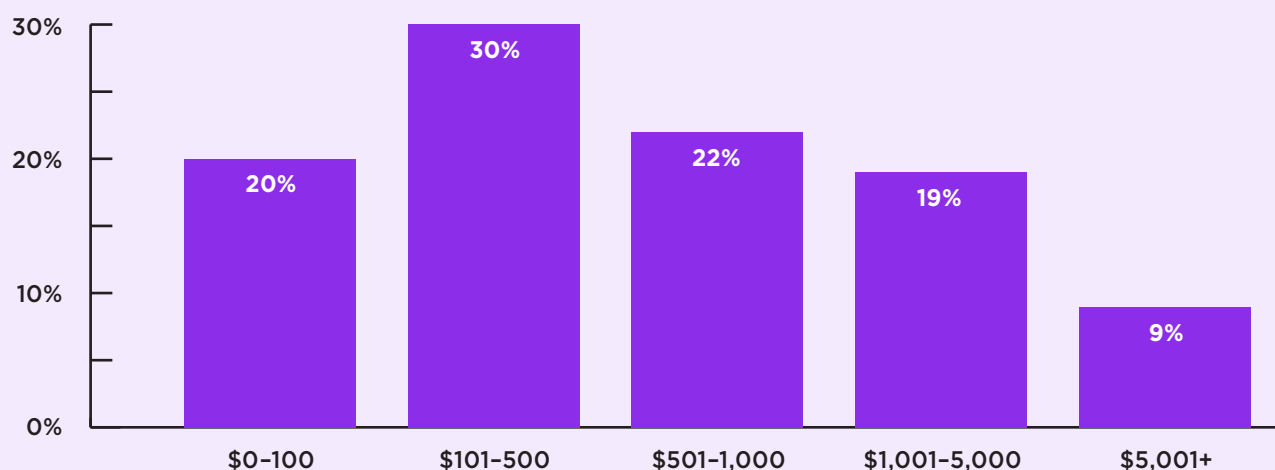
**Figure 13: Total Number of Years an Individual has Been a Member of any Collective Giving Group**



## Giving by the Numbers

An analysis of the financial data provided by the surveys reveals diverse contribution patterns between groups and among members. A plurality of groups (30%) reported an average member annual contribution over \$100 and up to \$500, with 20% contributing \$100 or less. Group leaders reported that the average contribution is \$2,852, with a mode of \$1,000 and a median of \$500.

**Figure 14: Average Financial Contribution of Active Members Reported by Group Leaders, in U.S.D.**



In terms of responses from members, financial engagement is high, with 95% reporting having made donations to their collective giving groups over the past 12 months. The average reported donation during this period amounted to \$4,285, with a median of \$1,000 and a mode of \$400. These amounts can be compared to the average individual's annual donation to secular causes of \$509 as reported by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (Osili et al., 2021). Moreover, 39% of members made additional contributions to the same organizations funded by their groups: the median and mode for these contributions were \$600 and \$500, respectively, and the average reported donation was \$2,428. Additionally, 89% of members made charitable donations beyond their contributions through their groups and their groups' recipients, illustrating that the expansive generosity of those participating in collective giving extends beyond their groups.<sup>1</sup> The most frequent additional donation amount was \$1,000, while the median was \$3,000, and the average additional donation \$17,922. This last number shows that group members often come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and income levels with many participating in groups to learn and then providing sizable donations to the same and more organizations individually as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the often-cited information from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's Philanthropy Panel Study, which revealed that only half of American households reported charitable giving in 2018 (the most recent year for which data is available) (Giving USA, 2023: <https://givingusa.org/>).

## 1.2 Collective giving groups are overwhelmingly led by women.

Collective giving was first characterized as a women's philanthropy movement in the early 2000s (Shaw-Hardy, 2005), and the data on the gender composition of its membership and the preponderance of all women's giving circles has been clear since the first landscape study (Bearman, 2007). Since then, the influence of women on philanthropy has only increased. A recent report called women's foundations and funds "change agents," due to their focus on outcomes, their orientation to community, and the profound impact they have on the lives of women, families, and communities (Gillespie, 2019). And as the recipients of a \$30 trillion wealth transfer by 2030, women and their communities are experiencing a monumental shift in wealth and potential influence (Ascent Private Capital Management of U.S. Bank, 2023). One can only imagine the ripple effects that this large-scale wealth transfer will have on the field, given how MacKenzie Scott (as one lone but extremely prominent example) has challenged the way that many donors engage in philanthropy. For example, an analysis of her giving showed that her style of trust-based philanthropy, conducted with an equity lens, resulted in stronger, more effective organizations (Buteau et al., 2023).

A thorough line of the research conducted on collective giving has been the critical role that women play in the movement. The gender imbalance among groups reflects the preponderance of women members: 84% reported that more than half of their membership consisted of women, contrasted with 12% being more than half men. Among all groups, 43% of leaders reported that the basis of their group's identity was their identification as women. Group leaders also reported that while 1% of groups based their identity on being men, 2% identified as transgender or non-binary.

Among individual member survey respondents, 92% identified as women, which is higher than earlier studies. For example, 16 years earlier, Bearman (2007) reported that 81% of her research participants were women. While it is possible this uptick in female participation in collective giving is the artifact of gendered participation rates in the member survey, findings from the focus groups and interviews show the "bonds of sisterhood" that are formed within collective giving groups, as shared by Hali Lee and other focus group participants.

As a vibrant movement led by women, collective giving offers a unique platform for leadership and influence that is not often found in institutional philanthropy. Collective giving groups offer female philanthropists the chance to cultivate their skills and expertise and foster a "sisterhood" committed to core values of impact and solidarity. Moreover, they are increasingly championing



I've met this amazing group of women that I didn't know before. I have connections in other areas of our country that I might not have had previously because of this. So that extra appeal of knowing that **I have these sisters who have similar values and similar beliefs...** I have people I can call on, if there's some reason why I might need them, [that's] important to me."

- Deirdre Murphy, Founder,  
[AttaGirl Giving Circle](#)



the principles of trust-based philanthropy in ways that will almost certainly influence the entire ecosystem of philanthropy. Within these groups, women play a central role, propelling the movement forward. As women make up an overwhelming majority of collective giving groups, they make profound connections through shared philanthropic endeavors, forming networks of support and empowerment.

In this way, the connections forged through women's engagement in collective giving initiatives reverberate with palpable excitement and vibrancy, whether through virtual platforms like Zoom or in-person gatherings. These interactions transcend geographical boundaries and even the diversity of the women in their lives, underscoring how these groups can serve as both bonding and bridging social capital within women's groups, fostering solidarity and connection. Furthermore, as 72% of members reported an increase in their learning about philanthropy through participation in collective giving, individuals and institutions interested in advancing women's leadership in the field should pay close attention to this method of engagement.

“

I started the Asian Women Giving Circle ... I think in hindsight, **psychosocially, I wanted a group of Asian girlfriends for the first time in my life. I had to create it, and the Asian Women Giving Circle has become that sisterhood for me.**”

– Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet, July 2025), on the power of collective giving



“

The impact of collective giving by women is more than just financial contributions. It has led to increased education [on philanthropy] for women. **This education boosts women's confidence in giving, prompting greater involvement, increased donations, and participation in board activities. This empowerment not only benefits the community, but also has a profound effect on individual women.** Considering the growing financial independence of women and the anticipated inheritance of significant wealth in the coming decade, communities, financial institutions, and philanthropic organizations are advised to take note of these groups.”

– Maggie Glasgow, [Philanos](#)



### 1.3 Collective giving is actively shifting the narrative around who is considered a “philanthropist.”

In philanthropy as a whole, the narrative of who is considered a philanthropist is shifting to include youth, diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, all faith backgrounds and more (Layton, 2022). Among its participants, collective giving expands the perception and practice of philanthropy, transforming the relationship that members have with their giving and encouraging them to see themselves as philanthropists. Center for Arab American Philanthropy Director Tamara El-Khoury, who was interviewed for this research, explains, “For so many of us, we think philanthropy is only accessible for incredibly wealthy, older white people.” But throughout the focus groups and interviews, collective giving leaders shared how transformative participation is for members. Many reported that it was not until they joined their group that they embraced their identity as philanthropists, despite giving and volunteering before becoming a member. The member survey reveals that nearly nine out of ten respondents (87%) identify as donors and/or philanthropists.

Despite the challenges with data collection, (as discussed in Appendix A: Methodology), the findings shed light on the diversity within collective giving groups and the opportunities for greater inclusivity and representation.

By engaging in collective giving, individuals can not only mobilize resources to address pressing social issues, but also inspire others to join them in reshaping the philanthropic landscape for greater equity and inclusivity by redefining who is a philanthropist and what counts as philanthropy.

There has been a noticeable increase in membership diversity in terms of age. Group membership statistics reveal a significant presence of younger individuals, with 39% and 77% of groups respectively reporting members aged 18–24 and 25–35. In 2016, the Collective Giving Research Group found that 25% of groups had members aged 18–24, while 63% included members aged 25–35 (Bearman et al., 2017). In terms of race, 20% of group leaders reported that half or more of their members were Black, while 19% reported that half or more were Latino, and 10% that half or more were Asian or Asian American.

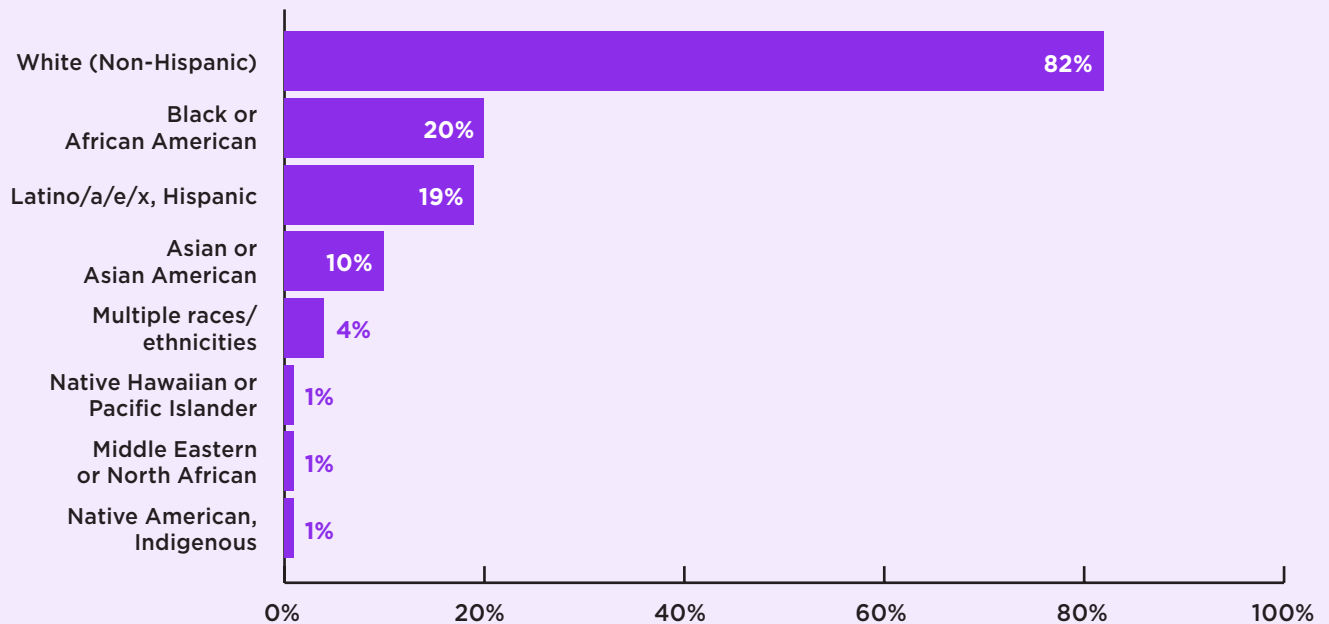


I Be Black Girl focuses on creating a space for Black women, femmes, and girls to authentically be. With the work that we’re doing with the giving circle, we wanted to liberate and empower them. **We learned that our work was twofold: educating the community because most times we don’t see ourselves as philanthropists, and we don’t even think that it’s possible that we can be a part of a giving circle, and do our own giving.”**

– Malinda Williams,  
[QMAHA 100 Inc](#)

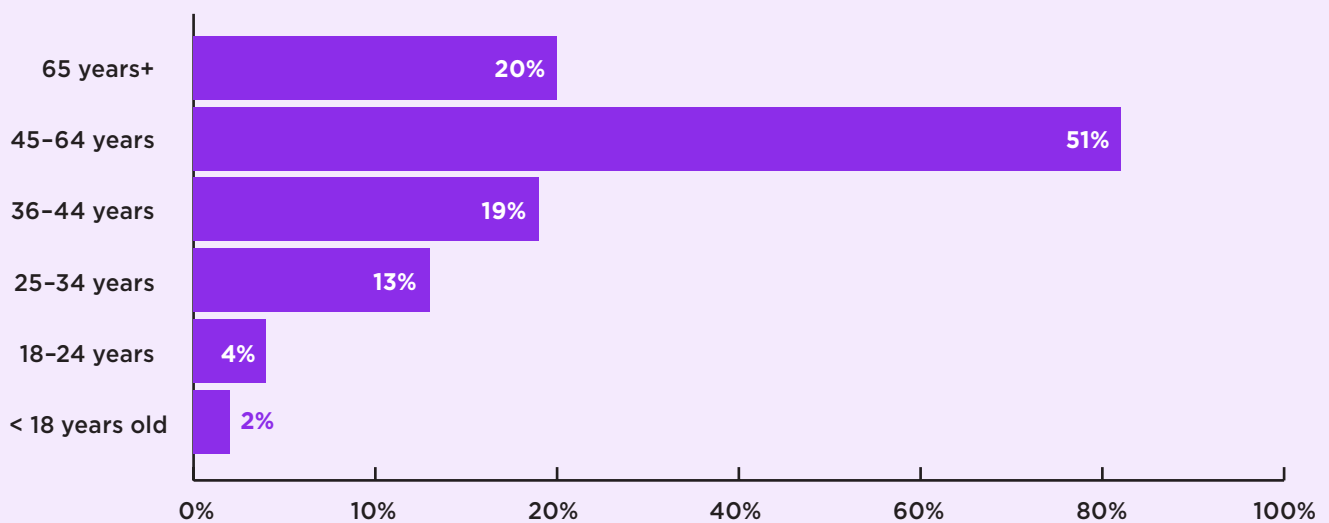


**Figure 15: Composition of Group Membership by Race and Ethnicity\***



\*Note: Chart shows responses of "All," "More than half," and "Half." Due to question wording and responses, percentages add up to more than 100%. For example, a respondent could answer "Half" for two different races or ethnic groups, and appear in two categories.

**Figure 16: Composition of Group Membership by Age**



Note: Chart shows responses of "All," "More than half," "Half," and "Less than half." Due to question wording, percentages add up to more than 100%.

“

The most important benefit I have experienced is planting a seed when we give to African American organizations that help youth in Atlanta. When I have had the opportunity to give grants to youth organizations, young people come up and say, **‘You look like my auntie, you look like my sister. That looks like my granddad.’** For them to see people of color giving to their organization, that’s not something that they may have ever seen or don’t see often.”

– Joy B. Webb,  
[Circle of Joy Giving Circle](#)



“

It was wonderful to be in a room with so many amazing philanthropists in our community. One of the women said, ‘This is the first time since becoming an immigrant and moving here that I’ve felt so empowered and proud to be in a room with all these other amazing [Arab Americans] who are philanthropists and wanting to make a difference.’ She felt so proud. **We want people to feel empowered, we want them to feel that they can make a difference, and that philanthropy is accessible.** For so many of us, we think philanthropy is only accessible for incredibly wealthy, older white people.”

– Tamara El-Khoury, Director,  
[Center for Arab American Philanthropy](#)



Focus group participants talked about their intention and efforts to diversify their membership. Even among groups who shared an identity, such as race or ethnicity, groups often expressed their efforts to identify which voices are missing and think through ways to bring them in — particularly underscoring the importance of sharing the breadth of lived experience from their community.

“

I wanted to try something a little bit different, as well as bringing along more emerging black women donors. **I’m trying to encourage a lot of my millennial friends to consider giving and [determine] what they want their philanthropic footprint to be, and I think that giving circles are a great way to do that.**”

– Shannon Jeffries, [The Tanna Fund at Ipàdé](#)



One way in which an understanding of who is a philanthropist is expanding via collective giving is the promotion of giving circles for youth. Two examples of youth-focused programs are sponsored by the [Center for Arab American Philanthropy](#) and [Honeycomb](#). Another noteworthy effort is [The Giving Square](#), which engages elementary and middle school-aged youth in collective giving with an intentional focus on building on their sense of fairness and generosity.

Obstacles persist in reaching and accurately recognizing underrepresented donors, highlighting the need for greater awareness and positive associations to ensure that they see themselves as philanthropists — as demonstrated by the Donors of Color Network's report, *Philanthropy Always Sounds Like Someone Else* (Lee et al., 2024). However, promising initiatives such as tiered membership fees and member sponsorships are proving effective in attracting younger and more diverse voices. Currently, only 13% of groups reported utilizing giving levels or tiers, while 75% expected their members to contribute a minimum amount, indicating room for improvement in implementing inclusive membership structures.

“

Not all these kids are going to become billionaires, but they certainly will have the capacity to give. If we instill them with the value of giving, they will then take the mantle to do more of this work as they grow older. It's critical that we provide more teens and youth with the opportunity to be engaged. **And seeing how they interact with one another, their ability to respect differences, and their capacity to identify a multitude of options to give, I think it's critical that they have this experience as youth, because they will carry it with them as they become adults.”**

– Wayne Green,  
Former Executive Director  
of [Honeycomb](#) and Founder  
of KAVOD Giving Circle



“

We just changed to five different options for membership contributions. You can pay \$300, \$600, \$1,200, \$1,800, or \$2,500 — whatever is meaningful to you. Everybody gets the same vote, everybody gets the same benefits. And it's fantastic, because we're getting younger women and returning members, and members sponsoring others.... **It's really important to be inclusive and say, 'Come, give what you can, and everybody gets the same benefits in the end.' We're doing equity work, so why wouldn't we be equitable in our contribution amount as well?"**

– Tammy Wilhoite, Coordinating  
Council Chair, [ninety-nine girlfriends](#)





## KEY FINDING 2

# Collective Giving Greatly Expands What Gets Funded

## 2. Collective Giving Greatly Expands What Gets Funded

This section analyzes how a focus on racial, ethnic, and gender equity has risen to the surface for many groups when it comes to their giving; explores the breadth of issues and populations supported by collective giving groups and the way it reflects a concerted effort to fund causes and organizations often overlooked by traditional philanthropy; and how that giving is happening in a primarily place-based way. Ultimately, the multifaceted impact of collective giving underscores its potential to empower marginalized communities and reshape the philanthropic landscape for the betterment of all.

“

I'm happy to say that the majority of nonprofits we support are very small, grassroots nonprofits. **Many are people of color who usually get overlooked because they don't have the resources or skills needed to fill out fancy grant applications, yet they are still doing the hard work of service.** We support all sorts of issues, whatever appeals to our members because our belief is that everything is interconnected when it comes to the community.”

– Dyma AbuOleim,  
[200 Muslim Women Who Care](#)



“

As far as the groups that we've given to, we have been told a couple of times that **we've been the first philanthropic group to give to those organizations.** So, we weren't the last. That meant that it led to other gifts from different forms of philanthropy. For our members, part of what we've offered throughout the years is programming. We've put together workshops where we talk about different forms of self-care, or building confidence, or what does imposter syndrome look like? Many times, the value of our programming is simply being among peers, surrounded by acceptance and love, and being able to talk openly.”

– Rita de la Fuente,  
[Latina Giving Circle](#)



## 2.1 Collective giving groups center equity when making funding decisions.

Collective giving groups' commitment to equity is longstanding, especially among groups organized by people of color. This commitment is fundamental to the collective giving movement, as 80% of all respondents to the member survey cited it as a primary motivation for their participation. While many collective giving groups orient their work toward advancing racial/ethnic and gender equity, other forms of equity, such as socio-economic and disability inclusion, are increasingly becoming recognized. Notably, 38% of groups prioritize funding communities disproportionately affected by inequitable systems, reflecting a commitment to addressing systemic disparities. Additionally, respondents highlighted the intersectionality of equity issues, with considerations for how different forms of marginalization intersect and impact communities.



**In 2020, during the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, equity and justice became buzzwords. For our communities, they were never buzzwords.** When equity and injustice became something that the foundation world decided to write papers on and make statements on, we had the advantage of having the SisterFund as well as a male version, the Ujima Legacy Fund. They came to us and said, 'What can we do?' We were in a position of power without even knowing it. We raised a million dollars to create a new organization, the Amandla Fund for Economic and Racial Justice."

– Jill C. Coleman, Endowment Chair and Past Chair, [SisterFund](#)



### Groups are Committed to Racial/Ethnic and Gender Equity

A significant portion of collective giving groups (60%) reported an explicit commitment to addressing racial and ethnic equity as fundamental to their groups' approach to giving. This commitment manifests in various ways, with 46% of groups emphasizing the selection of recipients through a racial and ethnic lens, and 43% directing gifts towards addressing racial and ethnic inequities and injustices. Notably, the intersectionality of causes selected for funding further underscores the prioritization of racial equity considerations. For instance, among the 35% of groups that funded human rights issues, 81% focused on racial equity causes, reflecting a nuanced approach to addressing systemic disparities. Additionally, 40% of groups designed their collective giving processes explicitly to promote racial and ethnic equity and justice, further solidifying a commitment to equitable outcomes.

A notable proportion of collective giving groups (43%) intentionally incorporated gender equity into their giving approach, with 28% of groups applying a gender lens to recipient selection and 26% directing gifts towards addressing gender inequities and injustices. Moreover, 21% of groups designed their giving processes explicitly to promote gender equity and justice, highlighting a

multifaceted approach to fostering gender-inclusive outcomes. Further illustrating this commitment, 25% of groups primarily funded specific gender and sexual identities, and a significant majority (70%) of groups supporting human rights causes prioritized gender equity, indicating a concerted effort to address intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination.

## 2.2 Collective giving groups give to community-based organizations.

Who collective giving groups fund are driven by a number of key factors. Collective giving groups fund local community-led and -driven projects. As seen in Table 1, 88% of leaders state that values and interest alignment is important to their giving. For 75% of groups, it was important to them that grantees served the communities from which members were drawn. Leadership is also important, with 77% emphasizing that leadership should reflect the community and 69% that leadership should be drawn from marginalized groups. More than half cited community feedback loops as important (67%) to their funding decisions. Eighty-three percent prioritized giving to organizations that actively support marginalized groups. Furthermore, a little over half (55%) sought out organizations with budgets smaller than \$1 million, acknowledging the potential for profound impact and growth within smaller organizations.

**Table 1: Group Criteria For Selecting Potential Recipient Organizations**

Criteria	Percentage
Alignment with our groups' values and/or areas of interest	88%
Support for marginalized groups	83%
Leadership that reflects the community served	77%
Same communities served from which our members are drawn	75%
Leadership from marginalized communities	69%
Community connections and/or feedback loops	67%
Budget smaller than \$1 million	55%
Opportunities for our members to engage and/or volunteer	36%

Because they fund through these criteria, collective giving groups are often the first funders of grassroots organizations and play a role in attracting other funders to recognize and support these groups. Elevating the visibility of their grantees, the researchers heard endless stories of how seed funding lent a higher level of credibility to a recipient organization, thus opening the door to funding opportunities from individuals and institutional donors.

## Groups Support a Range of Issues, Populations, and Organizations

Collective giving organizations exhibit a diverse array of supported causes, reflecting a broad spectrum of philanthropic interests, bearing in mind that respondents had the option to select multiple choices. Group leaders were asked, “What are the main causes or issues that the collective giving organization supports?” and offered 15 specific causes and “Other.” Notably, 112 respondents chose “Other” causes, with nearly half focusing on specific issues of racial equity and social justice. Further insights into particular causes reveal nuanced giving strategies within each category. For instance, among groups funding community development, an equal percentage allocated resources to economic mobility, economic development, and leadership/capacity building. Meanwhile, within the human rights category, considerable attention was given to criminal justice reform and labor rights.

Tables 2 and 3, below, provide a contrast, rather than a direct comparison, between the funding priorities of collective giving groups and private, independent, and corporate foundations in the United States (including community foundations, women’s funds, and United Ways). The data for collective giving groups indicates whether the group supports a particular cause, without specifying grant amounts by cause. Conversely, foundations disclose grant amounts through IRS Form 990 filings, categorizing the data by causes. It is important to note that both types of donors share similar priorities in the same hierarchy, with comparable proportions for their top four priorities. However, the contrast lies in the support for human rights: while this cause ranks fifth among collective giving groups at 35%, it is positioned seventh among foundations, receiving only 16% of grant dollars — about half as much as what collective giving groups support. Of the 35% supporting human rights, 81% prioritized racial equity, 73% social rights, and 70% gender equity.

**Table 2: Causes Supported by Collective Giving Groups**

*Groups supporting causes*

Rank	Causes	% Groups
1	Human services	48%
2	Health	47%
3	Education	43%
4	Community development	35%
5	Human rights	35%

Source: Q28 group survey.

**Table 3: Foundation Grants to Causes**

*Foundation grants to causes 2021*

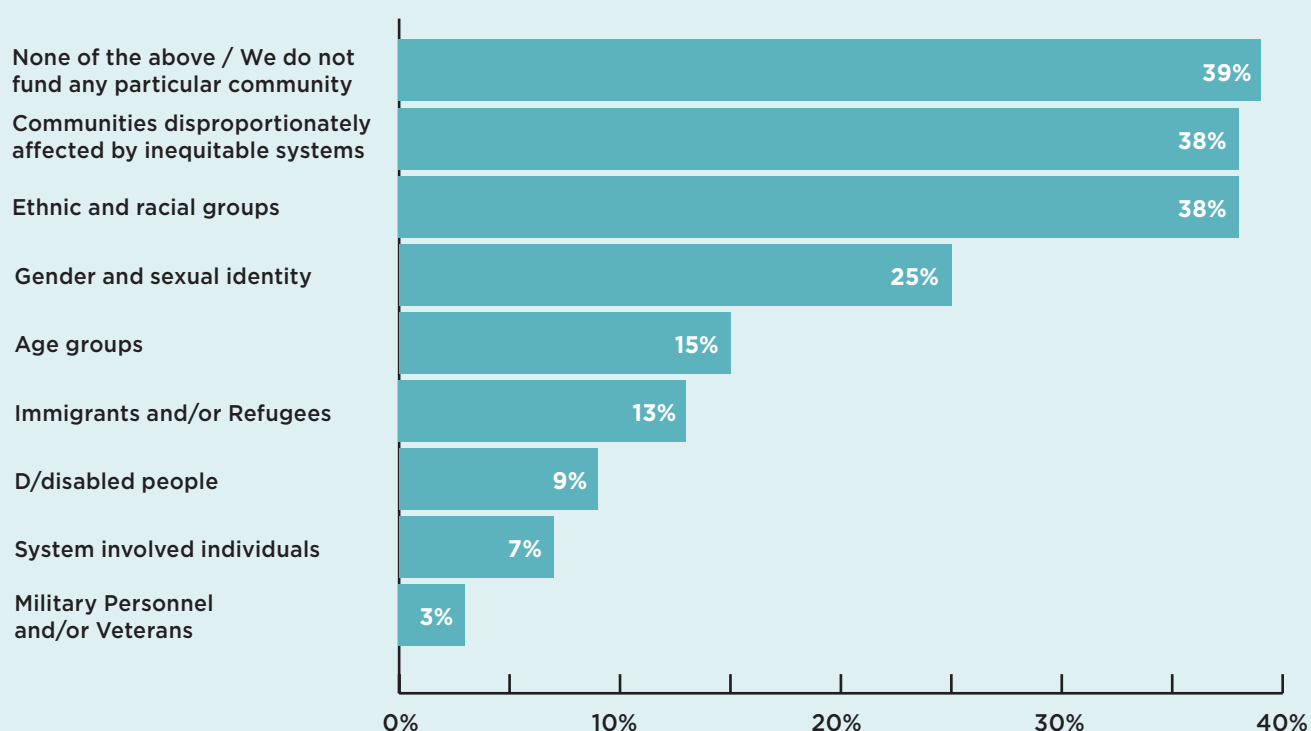
Rank	Causes	% Grant Dollars
1	Human services	48%
2	Health	44%
3	Education	41%
4	Community development	30%
7	Human rights	16%

Source: Foundation Directory Online (Data includes grants from private, independent, and corporate foundations, as well as public charities, such as community foundations and women’s funds).

## Giving By and For Communities

In terms of funding, 61% of groups reported directing their giving towards specific communities. Among these communities, a focus on those disproportionately affected by inequitable systems and specific ethnic and racial groups stands out. As indicated in Table 4 on the following page, as the percentage of representation of people of color increases, so too does a group's propensity to financially support communities of color and those affected by inequitable systems. In other words, there is a strong leaning of funding "by and for communities," for instance Black giving circles giving to Black-led and -serving causes, Latinx giving circles giving to Latinx-led and -serving causes.

**Figure 17: Communities or Groups Primarily Funded by Collective Giving Groups**



Thirty-eight percent of all groups support communities disproportionately affected by inequitable systems with 50% of these groups composed of a majority of people of color compared to 16% of majority white groups who support these communities. And while an identical 38% of all groups support communities of ethnic and racial groups, 75% of these groups are composed only of a majority of people of color compared to only 8% of white majority groups. These findings underscore the transformative potential of collective giving in enabling more representative philanthropy, by and for community, and reshaping the philanthropic landscape to be more inclusive and equitable.

**Table 4: Communities Supported Based on Collective Giving Group’s Racial Composition**

<b>What communities or groups of individuals does the collective giving group primarily fund? (Select all that apply).</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>White Majority Groups</b>	<b>Racial Majority Other Than White</b>
Communities disproportionately affected by inequitable systems	38%	16%	50%
Ethnic and racial groups	38%	8%	75%

In terms of demographic focus, of the 15% of groups targeting specific age groups, all prioritized children/youth, with 39% also supporting seniors. Regarding supported entities, nonprofit organizations 501(c)(3)s received support from the vast majority (95%) of groups, followed by informal groups/movement efforts (10%) and a range of other entities, including advocacy organizations, community funds, and social enterprises, each receiving support from 5% to 7% of groups. Focus group participants shared the impact and weight of this approach repeatedly.

“

The organizations that are funded by giving circles that are from the same ethnicity or identity view the support as a seal of approval or a level of trust. One of the grantees once said, **‘This grant from a giving circle has been a lot more important to me than a grant that was 10 times bigger coming from a large company. Why? Because this is coming from my community, from my people.’** He called me the day after he received the grant and he said, ‘I want to join the giving circle.’ Like that. I have many stories of nonprofit leaders that after receiving a grant from a giving circle, they want to be part of that community, also.”

– Sara Lomelin,  
[Philanthropy Together](#)



“

[Collective giving] transcends the conventional transactional dynamics to establish a relationship that allows you to holistically help an organization. **Our approach is distinctive because many organizations of color seldom receive grants from those who look like them.** It is great to give money but there are other ways to support organizations. The influence we can lend, the connections we can facilitate — sometimes, those become game-changers for organizations.”

– Marsha Morgan,  
[Community Investment Network](#)



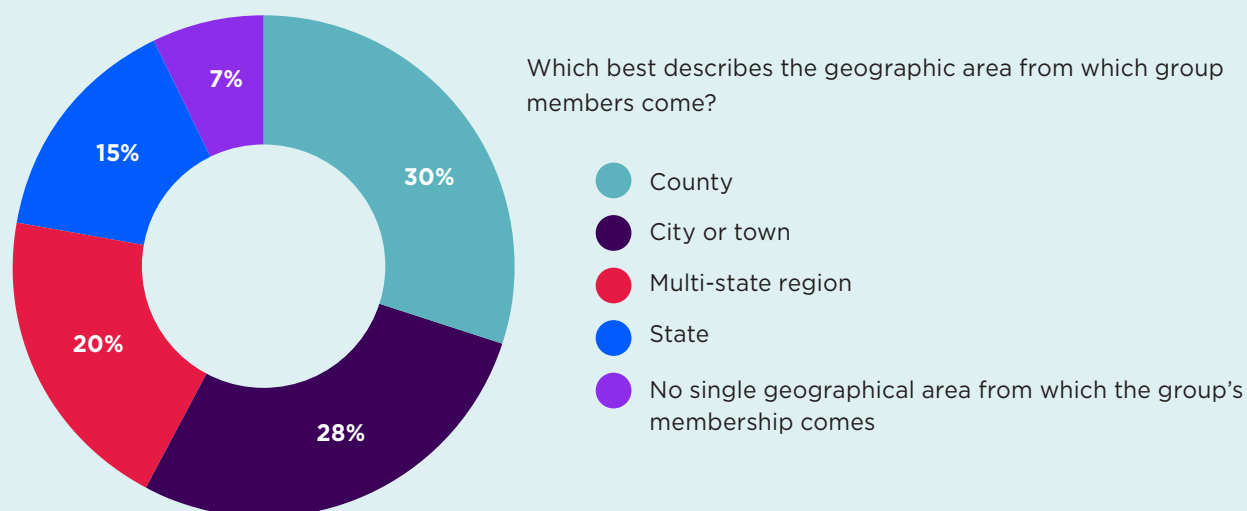
## 2.3 Collective giving is deeply invested in place-based philanthropy.

Because of the community-based focus of collective giving as a practice, there has been a strong bend toward local funding as seen in past research. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in groups' ability to expand beyond their geography as a means to grow their groups or gather around an issue not defined by geography. However, this research continues to show a strong place-based focus as seen in the following numbers.

### Geography of Members

The geographic scope of collective giving groups reveals a strong emphasis on local engagement and investment in community-based initiatives. Despite the availability of technologies like Zoom to connect people over distances, the vast majority (93%) drew members from a single locale or state.

**Figure 18: Geographic Area From Which Members are Drawn**



### Geography of Funding

This localized approach is underscored by the observation that these groups often prioritize funding within their immediate community. Nearly three-quarters (70%) of leaders reported that their funds stay in their home state, and nearly half of all respondents (47%) reported making grants within the same city, town, or county. An additional 16% reported making grants in a multi-state area or region, with the bulk of those text responses referring to metropolitan areas, such as greater Washington, D.C. A small percentage also allocated funds at broader levels, with 5% focusing on the entire U.S. and 2% engaging in international funding. The alignment between the geographic origins of group members and the primary funding location focus underscores a

commitment to community-rooted involvement and community-driven solutions. This localized approach presents a compelling argument for the role of community foundations and women's funds in hosting and supporting these initiatives, given their intimate knowledge of local needs and networks at a time when many of their peers are embracing the ideals of community leadership and equity (Community Foundations Leading Change, 2021; Paarlberg, 2021; Wu, 2021).



## A CLOSER LOOK

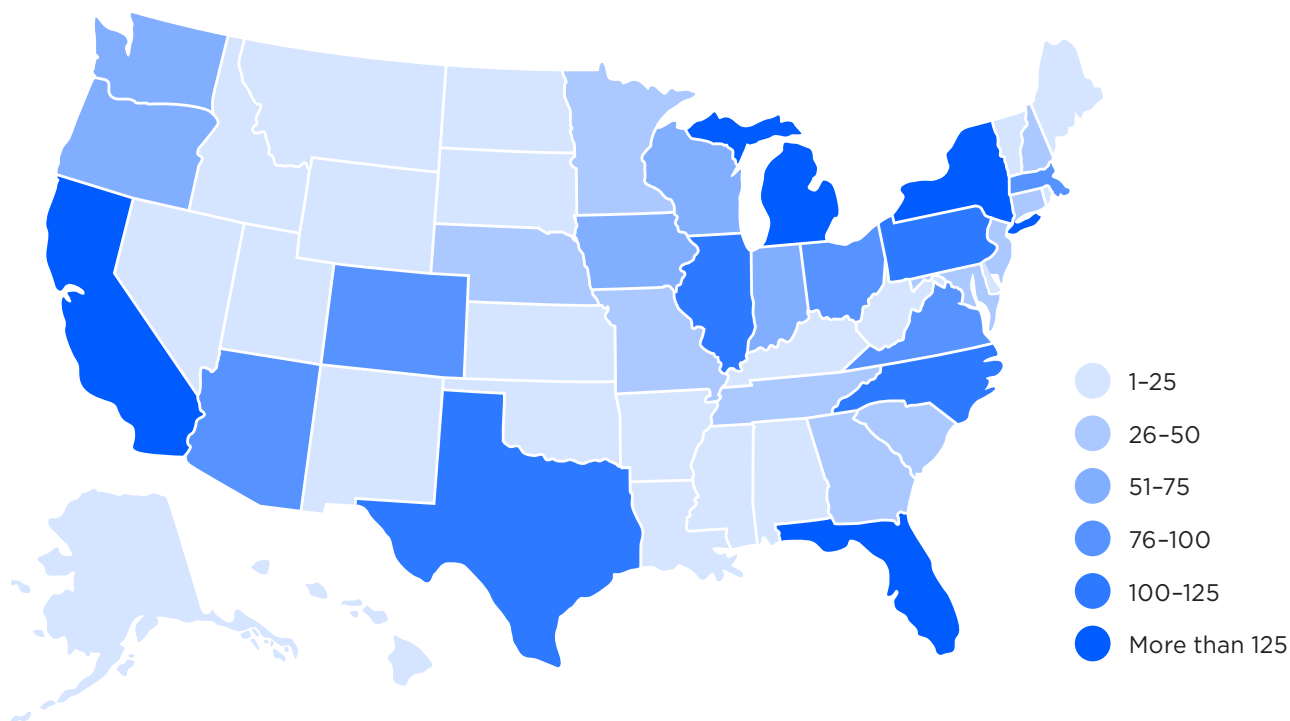
# Geographic Landscape of Collective Giving

This is a snapshot of geographic locations of collective giving groups across the U.S. These data were gathered from the census work completed in order to understand the scale of the movement, as detailed in Appendix H. These data were not part of the research surveys conducted and shared in this landscape study, but is a separate dataset (primarily extracted from the [Global Giving Circle Directory](#)) meant to provide a rough indication of the spread of collective giving groups across geography.

All 50 states within the U.S. have at least one collective giving group, showcasing the vast geographic reach of this movement. As discussed in Section 2.3, groups give locally and at the state, national, and international levels. There is an opportunity to support the growth of new collective giving groups in communities across the country and around the world.

There are high concentrations of circles in coastal metropolitan areas (California, New York, Florida), lots of room for growth across the Mountain West (New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Wyoming) and the Southeast (Kentucky, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, West Virginia, Arkansas, Delaware) where there are fewer than 25 circles per state.

**Figure 19: Concentration of Giving Circles in the U.S., 2016-2023**





THE SOAR COLLECTIVE

### KEY FINDING 3

## Collective Giving Pushes the Bounds of How Philanthropy is Practiced

### 3. Collective Giving Pushes the Bounds of How Philanthropy is Practiced

This section analyzes how participation in collective giving expands what members consider “philanthropy,” how diverse learning opportunities within group processes creates the space for donor education, and how that education can lead to practices of trust-based philanthropy. By fostering a deeper understanding of philanthropy that aligns with the specific needs of communities, collective giving has the potential to reshape the context within which community-led organizations secure funding.

“

We did a ripple effect mapping, and what really excited me is that **people didn't talk about the money they gave away. They talked about how participating in a giving circle caused them to look at their world differently.** ... They didn't know the importance of having culturally specific nonprofits, where two orgs seemingly addressed the same issue, but they served two different cultures. ... and other people were like, 'I've never thought of power dynamics, I've never seen myself in a place of power and privilege. And so now I think more about the power dynamics as I enter the room.'”

– Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)



“

**Through my collective giving experience, I'm shifting the way I give, spend, and act to better align with my core values and with why I exist.....**Shift-ing from asking 'How much can I give?' to asking 'How much do I need?'... Asking 'Where am I spending my money today? Tomorrow?' ... Asking 'How do we measure Love? Healing? Well-Being? Belonging? Liberty and Justice for All?' ... Asking 'How can I more deeply share my power? My resources?' ... And asking 'What am I doing today? What am I getting ready to do tomorrow?'”

– Guff Van Vooren,  
[Social Venture Partners](#)



### 3.1 Collective giving changes what counts as “giving,” harnessing all 5Ts (Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimony, Ties).

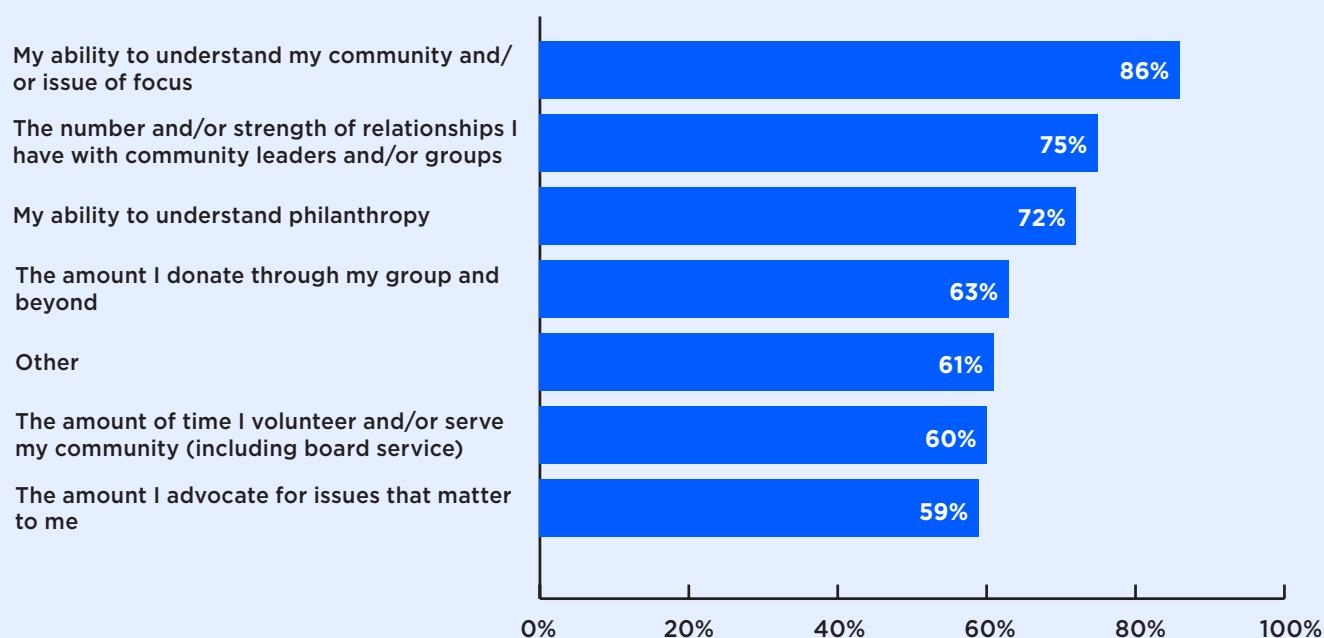
While traditional philanthropy typically focuses on one “T,” Treasure, collective giving moves beyond that narrow frame to a more expansive view of what counts as giving, including Time, Talent, Testimony, and Ties. Some interviewees shared that their relationship to and attitudes about money were changed as a result of their participation, moving from a mindset of scarcity to one of abundance. Participants in collective giving groups are not only increasing the magnitude of their impact on overlooked organizations but also demonstrating greater generosity than before they joined their group. A substantial 63% of members reported an increase in the amount they donate, both within and beyond their collective giving group, since joining. Similarly, 60% reported an increase in the amount of time volunteered, including involvement in board service, and in other non-monetary forms of support for their communities. Additionally, 60% indicated a heightened frequency of giving and/or fundraising to support nonprofit organizations and community initiatives.

When considering their group’s recipients, participants demonstrated a holistic approach to support, extending beyond monetary contributions, as two-thirds (66%) reported making additional non-monetary contributions to recipient organizations. Among these contributions, 25% volunteered (Time) directly with the recipients, while 22% offered their expertise (Talent) to aid in organizational development. Moreover, 57% engaged in spreading awareness (Testimony) about the recipients, and 13% actively fundraised on behalf of the organization (Treasure). Furthermore, 23% contributed non-monetary support by leveraging their networks and connections (Ties) to benefit the recipients.

Beyond supporting grantees, and in terms of their own collective giving group’s activities, 91% of respondents reported making additional non-monetary contributions to their group itself. Specifically, 65% volunteered their time with their collective giving group, showcasing a commitment to hands-on involvement. Additionally, 50% contributed their expertise to benefit the group’s initiatives and operations. Furthermore, 79% actively spread awareness about their group, serving as advocates for its mission and impact. Moreover, 18% engaged in additional fundraising efforts to support the group’s activities and initiatives. Finally, 42% shared their networks and connections with the group, highlighting the importance of community and collaboration in collective giving endeavors. These diverse forms of engagement demonstrate the depth of involvement and commitment among participants, contributing to the collective success and sustainability of the group’s philanthropic efforts.



**Figure 20: Impact of Joining a Collective Giving Group Upon Members, Increased**



And across the board since joining a collective giving group, members note an increase in the amount they donate, volunteer, advocate on issues that matter to them, and the strength of relationships they hold. Expanding an individual's view of philanthropy creates lasting impact on both the individual and civil society writ large. As collective giving is by and large a democratized form of everyday philanthropy, the giving of so much of one's self points toward broader desires for professional and financial growth as shared by one Latina philanthropy professional and focus group participant:

In giving circles, we give our time, our treasure, and our talent. It doesn't acknowledge the disparity that our communities have experienced for so long, like the disparity in treasure, owning homes, or having high-paying jobs. ... You can't just say, "You are so giving in all these ways and it's so amazing," without supporting us moving from mid-level to high-level positions or jobs.



### 3.2 Collective giving is emerging as a promising space for donor education and organizing.

Collective giving is a promising space for donor education and organizing, providing individuals with opportunities to deepen their understanding of philanthropy and equity while seeking impactful change. As this quotation from participant Jillian Lane White of the North Star Fund demonstrates, collective giving provides a means for groups with a shared identity to use this tool to orient their traditional giving and deepen their philanthropic and community knowledge: “Part of what we’re trying to do is transform people’s relationship to their giving long-term and give people the political education that they need in order to be really engaged in organizing. We want to hear from our community, to actively be in relationship with them.”

A notable 72% of members reported that their participation enhances their comprehension of philanthropy, highlighting the transformative potential of these groups. Through various learning opportunities such as networking events, educational workshops, volunteer activities, and site visits, collective giving groups offered avenues for members to engage with philanthropic concepts and community needs.



This type of giving has opened up the eyes of every member of the collective to the pretty dramatic inequality that exists within mosques in terms of where race, poverty, socio-economic status, all of that, intersect. **All of us collectively are walking away with a feeling of being better educated, better prepared to counter what we might not have recognized as implicit bias in our social and religious structures.”**

– Rabea Chaudhry Bay Area Collective Giving in San Francisco, California,  
[American Muslim Community Foundation](#)



By nurturing a deeper understanding of philanthropy aligned with community needs, collective giving can effectively transform the context in which community-led organizations fundraise, ultimately amplifying their impact and fostering a more equitable philanthropic landscape, particularly given the previously mentioned data on the local nature of these groups. Moreover, in focus group discussion, participants shared how their groups strive to address power dynamics within their ranks, as emphasized by advocating for the redistribution of wealth-associated power and the empowerment of leaders with lived experiences to drive change. This paradigm shift is essential for nurturing meaningful philanthropy that addresses social justice concerns, as articulated by members reflecting on their learning journey.

Of particular note, collective giving groups play a pivotal role in enhancing members' understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. A staggering 77% of members reported a positive impact on their learning about DEI through participation in their groups. This individual-level growth in understanding complements the group-level commitment to equity-driven practices, fostering a holistic approach to addressing societal inequities.

“

The most important benefit that I've experienced is being a resource for connecting people and causes. In the short time that I've been here, specifically in an LGBTQ+ giving circle, there are individuals who have said to me, 'I know that there is a need, but I don't know what that need is.

**I'm happy to give the money but somebody else needs to do the most good with it.' It's building those bridges and vice versa."**

– Clinton Bublitz, Lancaster County LGBTQ+ Giving Circle Advisory Committee, [Lancaster County Community Foundation](#)



“

Educating people on giving circles, ... on really what the needs are in the community, out of that, you start seeing this ripple effect — we gave to the giving circle because it went to buy backpacks for this neighborhood of kids that don't have backpacks but then we realized the reason they don't have backpacks is because the majority of the kids live in single parent households, and there's no jobs for the mothers in that community. They don't have transportation. **It uncovers a lot of other systemic issues that exist. The education piece is not just about giving, it's about understanding why you're giving and how those issues can be addressed too."**

– Jamie Rasberry, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships, [Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy](#)



### 3.3 Collective giving groups practice trust-based philanthropy.

Trust-based philanthropy as a practice has seen a notable increase since the latest landscape research (Bearman et al., 2017) was conducted. Efforts like the Trust-Based Philanthropy Project have sought to popularize principles of mutual accountability and shift power dynamics in order to advance a more just and equitable society (Trust-based Philanthropy Project, n.d.).

Collective giving groups embody the principles of trust-based philanthropy, prioritizing community building and fostering deep connections with grant recipients. Participants within these groups emphasize the importance of cultivating trust and understanding within the communities they serve, recognizing that such relationships alleviate the need for organizations to justify their existence or present formal pitches. By leveraging these deep connections, collective giving groups gain valuable insights into community needs and dynamics, enabling them to make informed funding decisions that resonate with the lived experiences of those they aim to support. Collective giving groups also place a strong emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in their giving processes as seen in previous sections of this report.



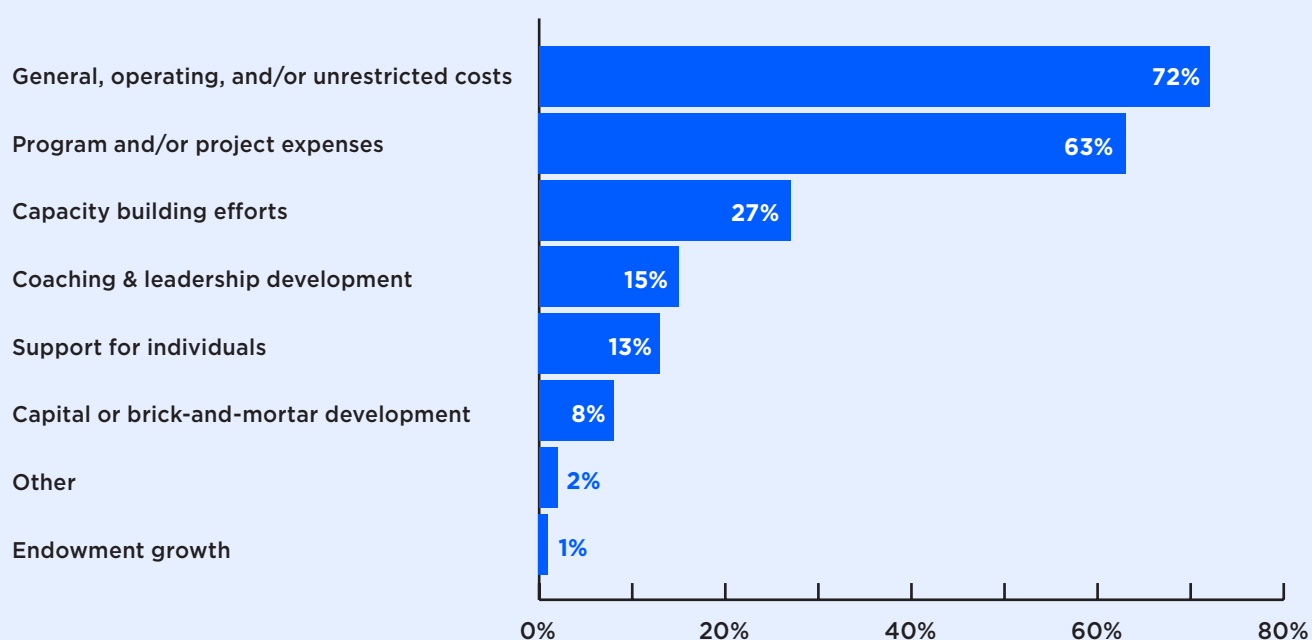
**Trust-based philanthropy is really at the core of what we do, ... community building alleviates the need for organizations to give a pitch or to justify their existence,** essentially, and utilizing those deep relationships to really gain the context of what's happening within the community that we're hoping to provide funding towards."

- Raksmeymony (Rex) Yin, [Asian Mosaic Fund](#)



A key characteristic of trust-based philanthropy evidenced by collective giving groups is providing general operating and/or unrestricted funding (Trust-Based Philanthropy Project, n.d.), which 72% of groups reported. This commitment reflects a belief in supporting organizations' core needs and long-term sustainability. Collective giving funding is also typically nimble and flexible, with groups able to make investments of all types. For example, 63% of groups allocated funds towards program and/or project expenses, 27% allocated resources towards capacity building, and 15% of groups invested in coaching and leadership development, evidencing an interest in nurturing talent and fostering leadership within the nonprofit sector. Finally, while less common, some groups extended support for capital or bricks-and-mortar development (8%) and endowment funding (1%), showcasing a diverse range of financial assistance provided to meet the evolving needs of grant recipients.

**Figure 21: Type of Financial Support Provided by Collective Giving Group**



Note: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Similarly diverse, the process of identifying potential gift recipients among collective giving groups reflects a member-driven participatory approach aimed at ensuring inclusivity and community engagement. Thirty-four percent involved their members in the grantmaking process by asking them to nominate or identify potential recipients. Additionally, a notable proportion (19%) released open calls for applications and/or proposals, allowing organizations or individuals who may not already have an affiliation with the group to apply for funding. Moreover, research plays a crucial role, with 16% of groups conducting their own research to identify potential recipients. Other strategies included disseminating requests for applications and/or proposals to specific recipients (11%), seeking input from community leaders and experts (10%), and considering unsolicited applications and proposals (9%). Overall, these findings underscore the diverse and purposeful nature of the recipient selection process within collective giving groups.



Focus group and interview respondents especially demonstrated that collective giving groups often see the application process itself as a means of supporting and lifting up organizations. The application and reporting processes employed by collective giving groups reflect a diverse range of approaches, all aimed at fostering trust and minimizing administrative burdens for grant applicants. About one-third (30%) utilized written applications and/or reports, indicating a structured process. Additionally, 16% of groups incorporated presentations into their application and reporting procedures, and 13% of groups conducted site visits. Seventeen percent of groups required financial statements and/or reports as part of their evaluation criteria. Interestingly, a minority of groups (9%) did not have a formal application and/or reporting process, indicating a more informal approach. Overall, trust-based approaches within collective giving groups encompass a holistic approach that values flexibility, community representation, and various feedback mechanisms.

“

**We embrace trust-based philanthropy. ... Our process is set up in partnership with our nominees. We want them to succeed.**

All organizations are funded...They may not get the full grant amount, but we've moved to a model where if you advance through the first round into the due diligence phase, you will receive some support. Organizations report that they feel seen and supported.”

– Mindy Freedman,  
[The SAM Initiative](#)



“

Through the collective giving movement, I've had transformative experiences connecting, building trusting relationships, and collaborating with incredible people and organizations around the world. By pooling our money, time, and connections, we engage shoulder-to-shoulder with front line leaders and organizations we partner with — those that philanthropy and other systems have historically left out. **They're the experts in our community — they're closest to the challenges and they have the solutions to solve for them. My role is to show up and support them in ways they need me to.** I'm learning this and so much more from these leaders. They're showing me better ways to move forward together for the long haul — with love, joy, resilience, abundance, and hope.”

– Guff Van Vooren,  
[Social Venture Partners](#)





#### KEY FINDING 4

# Collective Giving Deeply Impacts Members Themselves

## 4. Collective Giving Deeply Impacts Members Themselves

This section analyzes how collective giving significantly impacts members' well-being across many dimensions because of the built-in model of fostering belonging, purpose, and connection within communities. Through shared experiences, values alignment, and peer support, the data demonstrate that collective giving groups nurture a profound sense of purpose and belonging, enriching members' personal and professional lives, as well as the broader social landscape.

“

The most important is a sense of hope that things can get better when you participate. People are so nervous to begin or start something or join something new. **When they do they feel connected to something greater than themselves and that changes them, that changes everybody involved.** I think for the Latino community, they realized how incredibly generous and powerful they are. I think that cultural pride and power is more important than the amount of money that we moved. It's a sense of deep pride and self-awareness and something that has forever transformed the state of California.”

– Masha V Chernyak,  
Former SVP at the  
[Latino Community Foundation](#)



“

**I am working in my purpose and my passion. This is my well-being. This is my safe space. This is my happy place. Everywhere I go, I'm talking about collective giving.** My intro to philanthropy was the giving circle. so I've been able to influence and share about this work and collective giving in many different avenues. For Black Folks, these funds, and the time and talent that we use in the Circle of Joy, are also helping the well-being of the organization, plus we don't have a process that's asking 45 questions, or for your first child or anything like that. We are listening to you, and we're asking, 'How can we be of service?'"

– Joy B. Webb,  
[Circle of Joy Giving Circle](#)



## 4.1 Collective giving improves members' health, wellness, and agency.



Individuals feel it's really provided a well-structured, powerful platform for them to learn about the nonprofit ecosystem, how the social issues that we all care about are trying to be effectively and innovatively addressed, the ways in which they could actually more effectively leverage their time and their dollars towards that. **There's a real sense of energy and excitement and fulfillment [from] being part of a community of people who share the same values and desire for impact."**

– Jason Williams, [Social Venture Partners Boston](#)



### Why People Join a Collective Giving Group

Collective giving attracts individuals eager to amplify their philanthropic impact. When asked why they first joined a collective giving group, 85% said that they first joined to increase the impact of their giving by pooling their resources with others. Similarly, 80% underscored the importance of giving to causes, issues, or communities neglected by mainstream philanthropy as a compelling reason for their involvement. Furthermore, 79% emphasized the significance of adopting a more deliberate and strategic approach to their giving, indicating a desire for impactful and targeted philanthropic efforts. Interestingly, the least important motivation listed was to spend time with friends: this indicates that individuals are drawn to collective giving by its purpose, and the relationships that evolve out of this activity are grounded in shared values.

Among those who chose “Other” and wrote in their own responses, major themes include: “Making a larger impact with smaller dollars,” “Meet like-minded people/Broaden my personal horizons/Lead a purpose-filled life,” “Share knowledge with others, increase confidence and joy in giving among others,” and, “Support a cause I love in bringing more attention to the need to have low and mid-level donors giving consistently.”



A gathering of Sex Worker Giving Circle staff and fellows in 2019.

Figure 22: Reasons for Joining a Collective Giving Group Rated Important



## The Impact of Being a Member

Members of collective giving groups reported increased levels of wellness, with 55% saying that participation has positively impacted their ability to live a healthy life (physically, mentally, and/or spiritually). Many respondents further emphasized the importance of finding mutual support for navigating life's challenges through their circles.



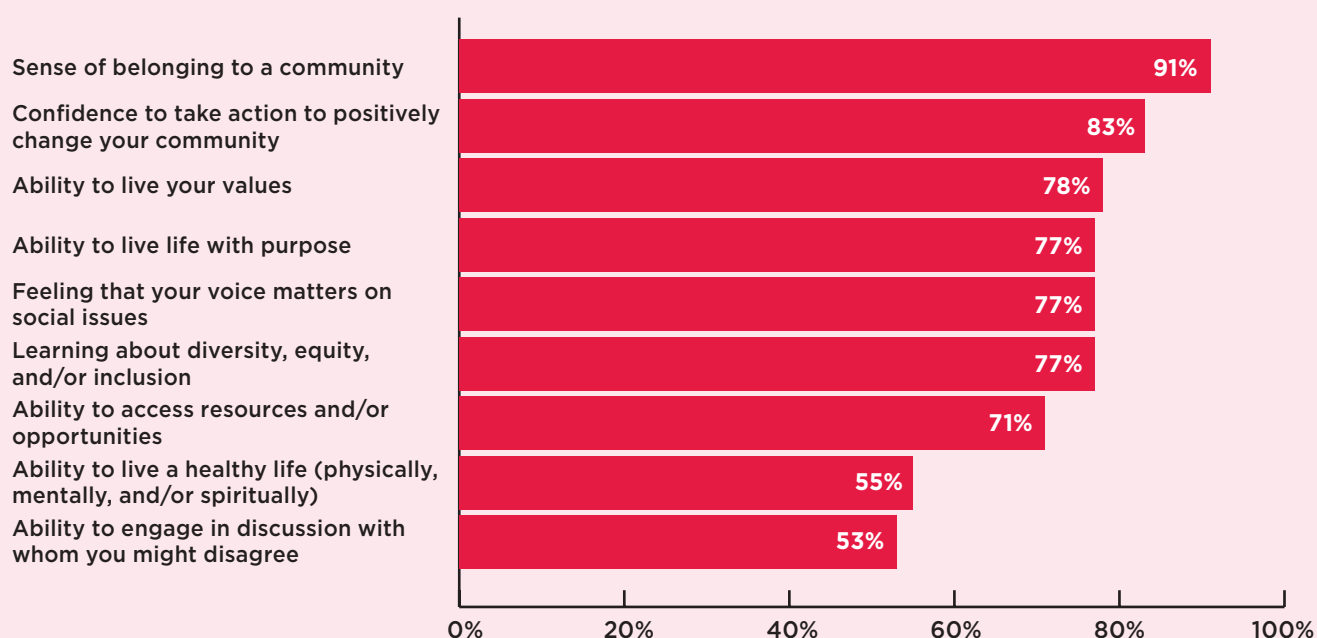
What I have found that balances me out is that we're all good friends, including the newer members. We have learned to support each other. **Yes, it's about helping others; however, if we don't take care of ourselves, we're not in any shape or condition to help others.** This keeps us mentally grounded and sane, so as a giving circle, we can help each other as well as others."

– Jackie Griffin, [COLA Gives of South Carolina](#)



Members also reported on the impact of their experiences on feelings of personal agency. Sixty-six percent of members reported a positive impact on the feeling that they can make a difference, 83% said their participation increased their confidence when taking action to change their community, and 77% affirmed that their participation positively influenced the feeling that their voices matter on social issues.

**Figure 23: Self-Reported Impact of Being a Member of a Collective Giving Group**



This agency is strengthened by linking learning to impact and other aspects of the relationship between intellectual stimulation and overall wellness. Members shared that, when deciding to first join, it was important for 85% of them to learn from others about issues and/or topics of interest to them through the group. The same percentage said it was important to them to increase the impact of their giving by pooling resources with others through their group. When asked if their participation increased their ability to understand their community and/or issue of focus since they joined, 86% said yes. And, as shared elsewhere in the report, participants reported an increased understanding of philanthropy at a rate of 72%, which was reported as a top benefit experienced from participation by two-thirds of respondents (67%). Together, these motivations for joining point to a donor base that wants to learn in order to give more effectively; to give to underfunded causes and groups to most leverage their resources; and to amplify their giving by doing it with others.

“

The circles have become so close knit, it's like a family. And I think that that's part of the stability of our circles as well is that **they have developed a family of givers, all like-minded, working passionately, to support the community.**"

– Kim Covington, Vice President of Community Initiatives at [Arizona Community Foundation](#)



“

Through this giving circle, it feels like I'm giving more. Coming from a social service background, my salary has not been very high, and I've had debt from graduate school. The people that I'm in the giving circle with have a more diverse range of income. **That has benefited me both in terms of being able to give more money to more groups, and also to have more honest conversations about income disparity and class amongst my friends...**"

– Cheryl Taruc, [Radfund NYC](#)



## 4.2 Collective giving groups foster belonging, purpose, and connection to community.

Participation in collective giving provides avenues for finding meaning in the lives of members and living in line with their values — 77% expressed that participation has positively affected their sense of purpose in life. A significant 82% of participants initially joined these groups to build relationships with others who share similar values or identities. A similar percentage (78%) reported a positive impact on their ability to live their values through collective giving, indicating that these groups indeed offer opportunities for individuals to engage in activities consistent with their beliefs and ideals.



The most important personal benefit is this fulfillment that I have experienced through the years by being part of the circle, giving through your heart and knowing that the time or the money or the connections that I [shared] helped the grantees have a bigger impact in their communities... **I don't have words. The best way to describe it would be, 'fulfilling.'**"

– Maria Alvarez, Founding Member, San Francisco Latina Giving Circle of the Latino Giving Circle Network® at the [Latino Community Foundation](#)



Collective giving groups foster belonging and connection to community: an overwhelming 91% of members stated that their participation has positively impacted their sense of belonging to a community, with 30% stating that they now more often belong to community groups, organizations, and/or associations since joining. Many reported that participation in collective giving alleviated feelings of isolation (such as among retirees and recent relocators) by providing a supportive environment where members share leadership responsibilities and navigate life's challenges together. Furthermore, participants recognized the cultural resonance of collective giving, particularly within communities of marginalized groups, where it aligns with authentic expressions of cultural values and identity, with interviewees using words like “safe space,” “sisterhood,” and “community” to capture their sense of belonging.

Additionally, at a time when participation in organized religion is in steep decline in the U.S. (PRRI, 2023), many giving circles and some networks are based upon a shared faith. For instance, for one interviewee, connecting with the “rich text and history” of Judaic generosity gave that person a way to engage with their religious tradition. As Aviva Stampfer of [Washington Women's Foundation](#) reported during an interview,

One of the things that I got really excited about at Amplifier was collective giving with a Jewish lens. There are a lot of different ways to be a Jew and my feeling is you find the way that works for you. This felt like it could be another way to be a Jew, and I was so excited that there could be something

that could work for people when a more religious perspective just didn't fit. I think that's why it's been successful; it can live both separately from the religious idea of Judaism, but still very much connected to that rich tradition and history.

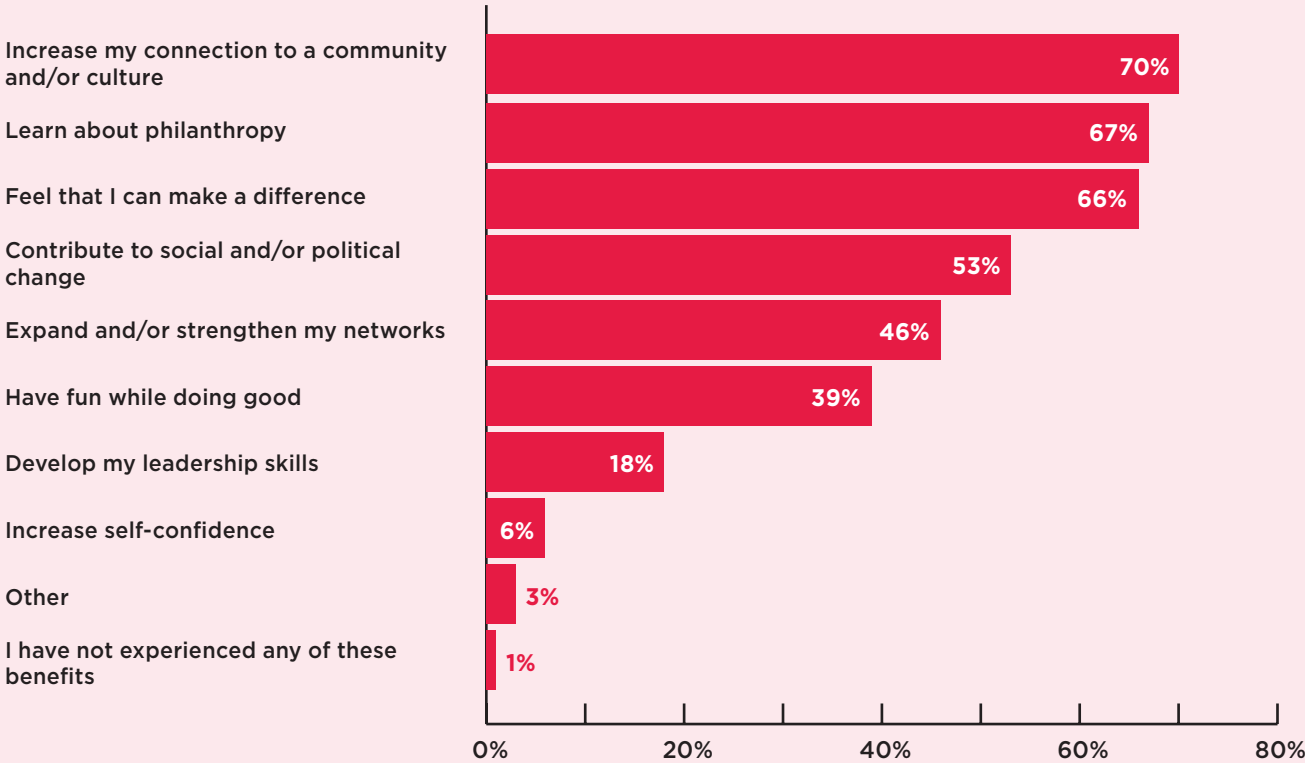
“

I'm a big fan of [giving circles]. When I knew there was one here in Charlotte, it became the natural place for me to engage — not because I needed to learn more about giving, but because I needed the intelligent resources of the group as to whom to support financially. The giving circle here has been the forefront leader in the field. It not only gives money away on an annual basis, but offers a number of educational programs throughout the year. ... **I see giving circles as a means to taking individuals who have interest in philanthropy, need to learn more about it, and work together with other people who are also interested. Not only in collective giving but also in collective learning. Both of those things after going hand in hand.**

– Ron Ancrum, [New Generation of African American Philanthropists \(NGAAP\)](#)



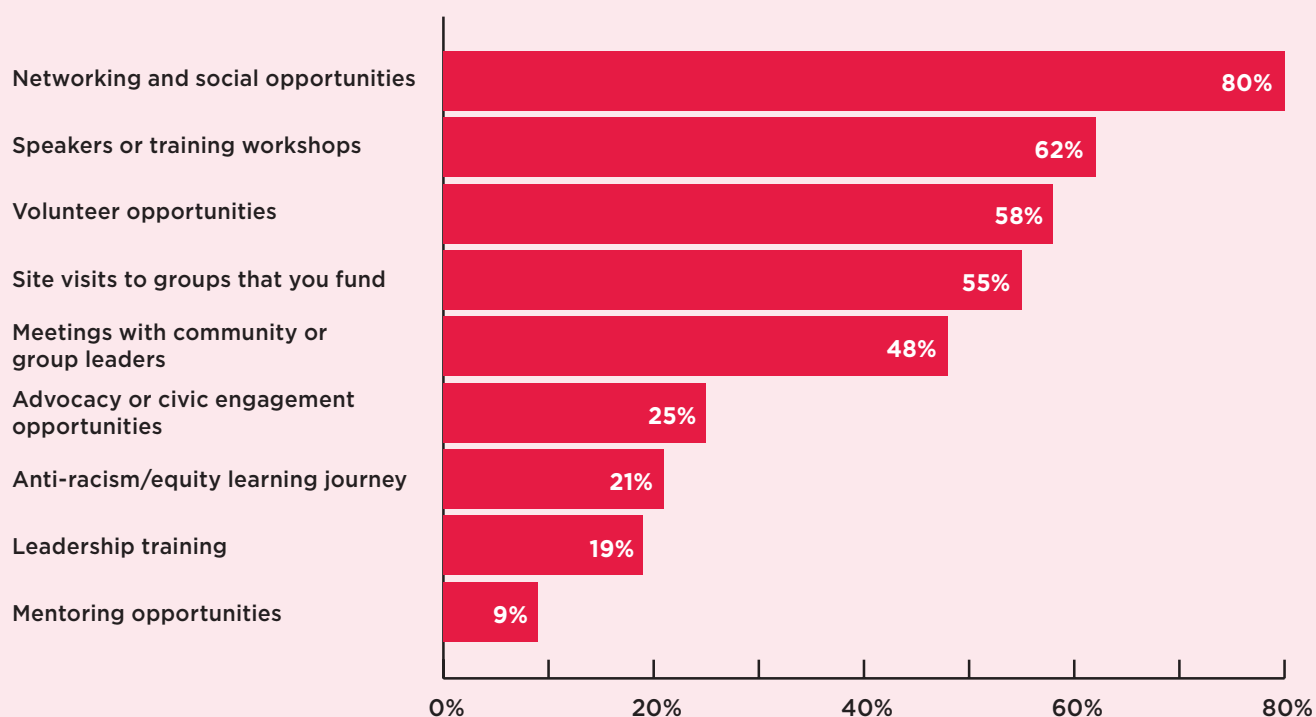
Figure 24: Top Benefits Experienced as a Result of Participating in Collective Giving Groups



### 4.3 Collective giving enhances members' professional pursuits.

Participation in collective giving groups can impact individuals along vocational dimensions, offering opportunities for personal satisfaction and professional enrichment. Forty-six percent of respondents said a top benefit of participation was expanding and/or strengthening their networks. Moreover, 18% cited the development of leadership skills as a significant benefit, indicating the relevance of collective giving in fostering professional growth. This was particularly true for early professionals and those transitioning careers. Additionally, a substantial 71% of respondents noted that participation in collective giving has positively impacted their ability to access resources and/or opportunities.

**Figure 25: Activities Provided to Members Through Collective Giving Group**



Notably, over 61% of survey respondents are affiliated with the social change field, highlighting the fact that individuals who work in mission-driven fields are also inclined to pursue mission-driven experiences in their personal lives. Some members have applied the principles learned from their groups to their roles in philanthropy, while others have pursued public office, ranging from school board seats to mayoral positions.

“

**This is a place where we're still connecting on a professional level, and we're still lifting each other up professionally.** We don't have to go through 20 layers of bullshit to do it. We've cut through a lot of that, and it's allowed us to see people shine and lean into their power. Without the knowledge that this is a safe space for that to happen, we would have been alone in that work.”

– Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships,  
[The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)



Collective giving also served as a sanctuary for members to express their authenticity, particularly as they may feel constrained in professional environments. Many focus group and interview respondents reported that their groups represent a safe space where they can shed societal expectations and authentically connect with like-minded individuals. This authenticity fostered personal agency and empowerment, enabling members to embrace their identities and advocate for causes they believe in without reservation. Additionally, collective giving may empower those working in philanthropy to reframe institutional practices and narratives, providing a tangible outlet for activism and agency. By bridging personal and professional spheres, collective giving groups empower members to enact meaningful change in both their personal lives and broader societal contexts, creating pathways to transform philanthropy and expand collective action.

“

From a professional standpoint, one of the greatest benefits that collective giving provides is the opportunity for people to engage in philanthropy that have not necessarily been traditionally deemed to be philanthropists. **I have been able to leverage my learning and practice in collective giving which has empowered my leadership;** being a part of a larger movement outside of, quote unquote, traditional forms of institutionalized philanthropy is transformational.”

– Imani Missouri, [DIFFvelopment](#)



## A CLOSER LOOK

# Collective Giving During the COVID-19 Pandemic



I started a giving circle in 2020 when it seemed the only thing you could do was sit on Zoom to get anything done. To form the circle, I approached women I had received money from in my professional career. I knew they were smart, savvy, philanthropically inclined, and were tuned into the area because we wanted to keep it very local. **[Our giving circle] completely filled so many needs for all of us. We were all looking for some way to give back, especially during the pandemic,** which had just started. It was perfect timing.”

– Gail Nunziata, The Athena Giving Circle



This study’s timeframe spanned the three years before the pandemic (2017-2019), the two years of its height (2020-2021), and the subsequent two years (2022-2023). This comprehensive window allowed for an examination of the impact felt by collective giving groups amid the initial effects of the 2020-2021 compounding crises, many of which continue today. Through synthesizing focus group discussions, interviews, and survey responses, nuanced insights emerged, revealing the movement’s resilience and adaptive strategies.

At the height of the pandemic, many groups intensified efforts to maintain membership and engagement. While some groups faced a drop-off in participation, the movement largely maintained its numbers by embracing technology (as most groups had an in-person framework pre-pandemic) and leaning into meeting the urgency of the crises. However, for groups prioritizing physical presence, a decline in engagement was apparent. Conversely, a widespread recognition of technology’s pivotal role emerged, particularly evident in the growth of virtual giving circles. Yet, the effectiveness of online support varied depending on each group’s nature and objectives. Despite fluctuations, collective giving groups and their networks exhibited resilience and potency, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth.



“

**Sitting at home, seeing that people of color were disproportionately impacted by COVID, witnessing George Floyd and the many, many other lives taken, the injustice all around, I said, ‘I want to do something.’** I want to start a giving circle.’ COVID was very beneficial to the giving circle because we were able to connect easily via Zoom. We got connected with the Community Investment Network (CIN), we got connected to Philanthropy Together, we started having conversations with giving circles that were in the CIN family. **We were like sponges. It gave us purpose during a seemingly hopeless situation. We could come together and do something to alleviate the suffering of our people.”**

– Lasindra Webb, [The SOAR Collective](#)



Narratives underscored the dynamic responses of giving circles amid pandemic upheavals. Notable adaptations included agile shifts towards trust-based approaches, reliance on virtual platforms like Zoom for connectivity, and strategies such as reallocating grants to general and multi-year operating funds, highlighting a commitment to prioritize the needs of organizations’ sustained impact. Collective action efforts, including mobilization around the 2020 U.S. Census, protests against systemic injustices, and voting drives, showcased participants’ dedication to addressing the compounding crises.

The group survey assessed respondents’ perceptions of the pandemic’s impact on their collective giving groups:

- 71% acknowledged meeting virtually more frequently than before.
- 63% indicated no delay in resuming meetings until in-person gatherings could resume.
- 65% reported no decline in membership, with 32% experiencing growth.

These findings illuminate collective giving’s resilience and adaptability in navigating unprecedented challenges — revealing both challenges and opportunities for growth, learning, innovation, and sustained impact.

“

In early 2020, we started a rapid response grant cycle, which we had never done before. Membership was incredibly generous. A lot of people donated. **Realizing that a lot of those government stimulus checks were not going to undocumented families or mixed status families, we said, ‘Well, we’re going to find a way to support folks in our community who need the support.’** We gave to seven, eight different grassroots organizations, some mutual aid organizations here in San Diego, to redistribute those funds directly to individuals. That was the first time that we had done that.”

– Alison Aragon, Member, [Latina Giving Circle in San Diego](#)





HERITAGE GIVING FUND

#### KEY FINDING 5

## Collective Giving is a Catalyst for Social Cohesion and Change

## 5. Collective Giving is a Catalyst for Social Cohesion and Change

This section analyzes how collective giving supports individuals in practicing the soft skills of democracy through democratic participation and collaborative decision-making; how the modality and process of collective giving supports both bonding and bridging social capital; and how participation catalyzes advocacy and active engagement in social change.

“

I've always dreamed of a States Project Giving Circle leader running for office because they've got organizing, fund-raising, and storytelling skills built up through our Giving Circles program and the work they do. **We just had our first Giving Circle Leader candidate in Minnesota — she ran for city council and won after a recount by a very slim margin.** The giving circle helped her see the structure of how you fundraise, bring people along and keep them engaged in a campaign that you see to fruition.”

– Melissa Walker, Head of Giving Circles at [The States Project](#)



“

Given the way that we've moved to be more secular and less tied to religious institutions, collective giving has the opportunity to augment how we gather, and bring back the societal norms of tithing and giving back that are rooted in religion. We have the opportunity to change how people connect, how people rebuild trust in institutions, how people make change in their community. **Collective giving could become the norm for how millions of people participate in their own future.**”

– Isis Krause, [Philanthropy Together](#)



## 5.1 Collective giving groups act as “schools of democracy.”

Collective giving groups serve as “schools of democracy” where members can hone their civic skills in ways that promote bonding and bridging social capital through and beyond their participation in their group (Putnam, 2000; Carboni & Eikenberry, 2018; Eikenberry, 2022). This contribution is even more relevant now, with Americans taking a “dismal view” of politics (Pew Research Center, 2023) — half have stopped discussing politics altogether (Jurkowitz & Mitchell, 2020).

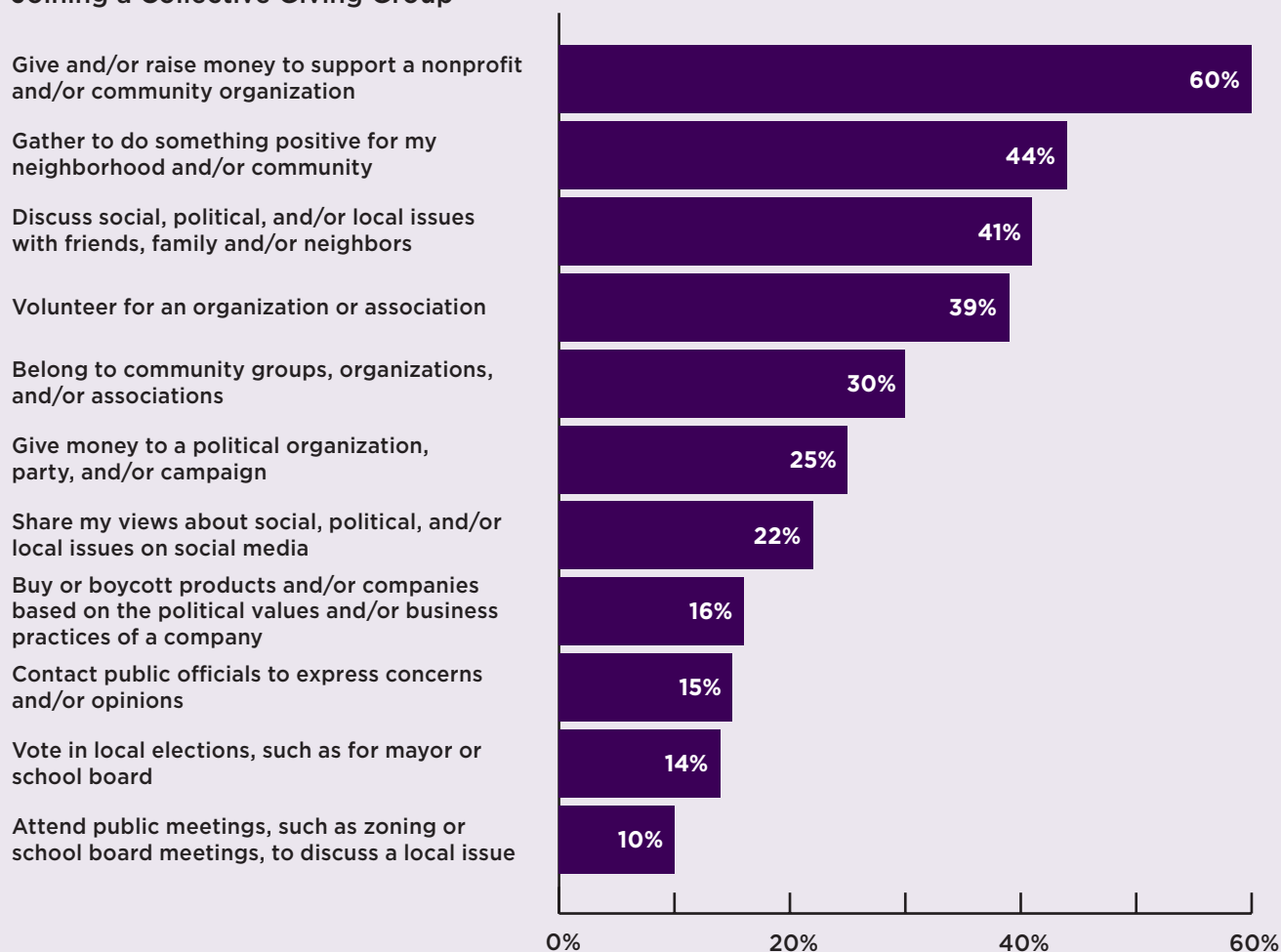
The survey results shed light on the various democratic mechanisms through which recipients are selected. More than half of groups opted for a democratic, majoritarian process wherein members vote for recipients (53%), with the majority’s decision prevailing. An additional 27% of groups adopted a consensus-based approach, emphasizing the importance of reaching agreement through dialogue and collective deliberation. Other approaches that feature delegation of decision-making or random selection are used by only a handful of groups.

It is essential to recognize the nuances within these processes. While some groups adhere strictly to majority rule or consensus, others embrace more elaborate procedures that prioritize equity and community representation — for instance, a multi-step process involving pre-selection or nomination by a subgroup followed by approval from the entire group or an approach involving decision-making by a group of members of color, ensuring that the final selection reflects the perspectives and priorities of marginalized communities. Amidst this diversity of selection methods, a common thread emerges — a commitment to equity, community empowerment, and meaningful participation.



The ripple effects of collective giving extend beyond the confines of group discussions, permeating participants' interactions in broader social spheres. 41% of members reported engaging in discussions on social, political, and local issues more frequently with friends, family, and neighbors since joining their group, highlighting the power of collective action in stimulating civic engagement and dialogue. Within groups, there's a palpable consensus that engagement aligns with their collective mission; 53% of respondents noted that their ability to engage in discussions with dissenting voices had been positively impacted by their membership, underscoring the group's role as a crucible for open dialogue and mutual understanding. For many, collective giving serves as a forum where diverse perspectives converge, fostering dialogue and collective action towards social change.

**Figure 26: Rate at Which Members Engaged in Civic Engagement Activities More Often Since Joining a Collective Giving Group**



“

Giving circles are a space where people can connect and get to know each other. Often people are so overwhelmed. There are too many options. There's too much to do. Sometimes we just need to start. A giving circle can often help people do that because you're already in the community. ... **It allows people to have tough conversations about how we give, how much we might give, how we can do our part to heal the world, and which values are central to our giving. A giving circle is not necessarily just our friends. It's a community home that you don't have otherwise.** To me, that's incredibly powerful. I think ... few people have the benefits of that kind of circle, a space where you can foster a conscious and intentional conversation.”

– Sasha Raskin-Yin, Executive Director, [Amplifier](#), powered by JFNA



## 5.2 Collective giving fosters bonds within groups and bridges across communities.

Bonding and bridging social capital within collective giving groups play pivotal roles in community empowerment and solidarity building (Eikenberry, 2009; Carboni & Eikenberry, 2018). Bonding capital strengthens connections within historically marginalized communities, enabling collective action to address systemic barriers and crises. Shared identities among members play a pivotal role in collective giving with 77% acknowledging common affiliations or identities among their members, such as gender, race, religion, profession, or political affiliation. Bridging social capital transcends identity boundaries, fostering collaboration and understanding across diverse communities and perspectives (Claridge, 2018).

The decision to join a collective giving group often stems from a desire to advance social and systemic change collaboratively. In fact, 79% of members responding to the survey cited the importance of working with others towards such objectives as a primary motivation for their involvement. Among respondents, 44% noted gathering to do something positive for their neighborhood more often since joining, indicating that the motivation to work collaboratively is being fulfilled. These percentages underscore the impact of collective giving on members' civic engagement levels and their contributions to neighborhood and community well-being.

### Bonding Social Capital: Power Building Within Groups

Participation in collective giving groups fosters bonding social capital and intragroup power building. Eighty-two percent of participants indicated that they joined to establish relationships with like-minded individuals who share similar values or identities. Within groups that share a racial identity, interviewees recognized the importance of variation in the age and socio-economic status of members.

The power of intra-group community and connection in collective giving groups is profound. These groups serve as vital spaces where historically marginalized communities found avenues to build power within their identities and direct resources to communities reflective of their identities.

“

**One of the great things about the giving circle is that it's intergenerational.** The youngest people are in their late 20s, compared to people in their 80s. What's amazing is to be around different Asian American women, some of whom were brought up in the U.S., some have immigrated here, from all walks of life, and just have a space to be hanging out and connecting as peers, rather than as your grandmother or as your kid.”

– Chitra Aiyar, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#)



## Bridging Social Capital: Building Solidarity Across Divides

In the realm of collective giving, the power of bridging social capital also emerges as a force for inter-identity solidarity and empowerment. While bonding social capital strengthens connections within groups sharing a common identity, bridging social capital transcends these boundaries, fostering collaboration and understanding across diverse communities and perspectives (Claridge, 2018). In this sense, the work within a collective giving group can be a microcosm of the kind of solidarity that the group hopes to engender in the large community.

“

**It is very important to our members that we stand in solidarity with other BIPOC groups and BIPOC issues.** That was one of our main tenets. We don't want to just address AAPI issues. We are very closely linked to the Black community because of the model minority myth. We have addressed that in webinars, that we're being used — not only is that myth a lie, but we are being used to create untruths about members of the Black and African-American community. We are not okay with that.”

– Kristi Keolakai, The Colorado AAPI Circle



Throughout the focus groups and interviews, participants shared powerful examples of how their groups worked to incorporate more diverse viewpoints and people with varied life experiences. For instance, one participant shared how their giving circle evolved its collective giving focus to encompass social justice initiatives for LGBTQ+ rights and gender-non-conforming individuals, expanding beyond their initial support for women and girls. Similarly, another participant reflected on their circle's diversity in terms of age, geography, and background, noting a gap in representation from Gen Z. This observation prompted the group to consider how to be more inclusive and democratic in their decision-making processes, ensuring diverse voices are heard and represented in their collective efforts.

“

I am inspired by individual and funder support of Native Women and Girls. One important piece of history that I teach in a powerful experiential learning session called the Blanket Exercise, is that more than 1 million Americans out of a total population of 13 million petitioned against President Jackson's Indian Removal Act. **When we can tap into that spirit of support, people standing up for us, that spirit of justice, it is amazing.** Knowing we have supporters out there even giving small amounts in our giving circle is so encouraging.”

– Gina Jackson, [Return to the Heart Foundation](#)



Participant Nabil Rehman, board member at American Muslim Community Foundation shared an example of how collective giving has provided a way for men in the Muslim community to learn about and support women suffering from domestic violence. The power of this example is in demonstrating how an act of generosity could bring together men and women within a religious community to address a pressing problem: “The giving circle is for Muslim men. The specific need in our community was to support a domestic violence shelter for Muslim women that’s not well funded. It is always doing fundraisers. And I thought, we are a very generous community, and perhaps this is a good opportunity for the men in our community to understand the needs and to pitch in financially to help support those needs.” These examples exemplify and bring to life the potential for giving circles to generate bridging social capital.



### 5.3 Collective giving spurs deeper levels of civic engagement.

In terms of political and partisan engagement, 59% of members reported an uptick in their advocacy efforts for issues important to them, demonstrating the empowering effect of collective action on individual advocacy. Moreover, 53% identified contributing to social and/or political change as a top benefit derived from their participation, and 25% noted an increase in their financial support for political organizations, parties, and campaigns since joining. These findings underscore the important role of collective giving in mobilizing individuals to actively participate in civic affairs and advocate for meaningful social and political change.

“

By virtue of being in the circle and learning from other people and learning about the issues and seeing the struggles that nonprofits are facing on the frontlines, you then get fired up about what's happening. And once you get fired up, you realize that change isn't going to happen because of your \$20, change is going to happen through much deeper systemic channels. **And because you feel empowered through your participation in the circle, you then also feel empowered to do more than that. And that leads to civic engagement.”**

– Isis Krause, [Philanthropy Together](#)



One participant highlighted the role of their giving circle in facilitating conversations around civic engagement and social issues. They emphasized the circle's potential to amplify community voices and address pertinent issues. By providing a communal space for dialogue and action, the giving circle can be a mechanism to empower members to participate in democratic processes and advocate for causes that matter to them. For instance, focus group participants shared how the civic engagement efforts of their Los Angeles Latino Giving Circle extends beyond traditional philanthropic activities to include hosting mayoral debates and writing op-eds.

The range of civic engagement activities facilitated by collective giving groups is vast and varied. From conversations across differences to hosting political debates and setting up groups to fund political campaigns, groups provide avenues for individuals to engage with their communities and effect change in multi-dimensional ways. In fact, 25% of groups reported that they provide advocacy or civic engagement opportunities, facilitating and fostering civic engagement in societal issues and the political process.

Depending on their structure, collective giving groups may have the potential to engage in political activism in ways that are prohibited to IRS-recognized charitable organizations and foundations. For example, initiatives like the States Project, which utilize the processes of collective giving, focus on funding political campaigns and advocating for policy change. The same logic of mobilizing resources collectively for philanthropic purposes applies to electoral and legislative action, and it is similarly appealing to donors who feel that their relatively small contribution cannot make a difference in the face of mega donors to political campaigns and parties.

“

**The thing that I see in my own life since 2017, when I started my Giving Circle, is that I feel like it has changed the way I walk through the world. It has given me an understanding of a power that I didn't realize that I had, a power that I wasn't deploying before my circle — and that is the power I have when I walk with my people.** ... Because working on collective giving and de-emotionalizing money, and making it about numbers of people that give rather than whether someone's wealthy or not... that, to me, has been a real revelation in terms of the impact that I can have. I was always thinking, 'Oh, I don't have enough money to be a donor.' And the experience of my Giving Circle really changed that. I was like, 'Oh, no, I am a heck of a donor because I come with all these people.' We have power when we do this together.”

– Melissa Walker, Head of Giving Circles at [The States Project](#)



Participation in collective giving groups promotes civic engagement and collective action. By bringing together many hands to construct a platform collectively, building democratic skills, jointly mobilizing resources, and promoting civic participation, these groups empower their members to address systemic injustices, advocate for change, and build more equitable and resilient communities.





# Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed through active engagement with focus groups and interview participants and reflect the value that more giving by more people is a positive good for society. Individuals and institutions interested in furthering this movement may consider the following recommendations:

## For Philanthropic Institutions

- 1. Embrace and Learn from Collective Giving:** Philanthropic institutions should actively support and collaborate with collective giving organizations and networks to amplify the impact of philanthropic efforts, particularly in addressing issues they may otherwise overlook. This can include acting as hosts and encouraging trustees, leadership, and staff to participate as members.
- 2. Invest in Community-Led Solutions:** Being closely connected to the community and often serving as first funders are key characteristics of collective giving groups. Philanthropic institutions should allocate resources towards supporting grassroots and community-led initiatives, including collective giving initiatives, recognizing the expertise and insights of community-connected leaders in addressing systemic challenges.
- 3. Fund the Infrastructure that Sustains Collective Giving Groups:** Philanthropic institutions should prioritize funding the infrastructure that supports collective giving groups and facilitates donor education and activation efforts. This includes providing financial support for organizations and networks that oversee collective giving initiatives, ensuring their sustainability and effectiveness. By investing in these essential components, philanthropic institutions can empower collective giving groups to thrive, which supports community leadership and drives direct community and societal impact.

## For Members and Leaders of Collective Giving Groups and Networks

- 1. Expand Outreach and Inclusion:** Collective giving groups and networks should remove any remaining barriers to entry and prioritize outreach efforts to engage a diverse range of participants, including those from historically marginalized communities, to ensure inclusive representation and equitable decision-making continues to define the groups. This work should also include efforts to capture more demographic data on participants in collective giving, in a manner that respects each person's dignity and privacy.

- 2. Embrace the Principles and Practices of Trust-Based Philanthropy:** Being close to community provides collective giving groups and networks an opportunity to demonstrate the value and impact of trust-based practices. While already widely used, these practices can be deepened.
- 3. Foster Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Collective giving groups and networks should facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing both among their members and with other groups — including other collective giving groups, institutional philanthropy, family philanthropists, and individual donors — to leverage collective expertise, amplify impact, and address complex social issues.

## For Individual Donors

- 1. Engage in Collective Giving:** Individual donors and philanthropists — no matter their wealth level—should consider joining or establishing collective giving groups to heighten the impact of their philanthropic contributions and engage in collaborative decision-making processes. Learning and giving together is a powerful mechanism for personal and community change.
- 2. Expand Your Thinking on “Philanthropy”:** Collective giving is pushing the bounds of who, what, and how philanthropy is practiced. Individual donors can apply these lessons to giving beyond treasure (to include time, talent, testimony, ties as well); giving with trust and relationships at the core; and actively seeking out opportunity to support marginalized communities and causes.
- 3. Support for Systemic Change:** Individual donors and philanthropists can use their resources and platforms to advocate for systemic change and address root causes of social inequities, continuing to leverage collective giving as a tool for social justice and transformative change.



## For Philanthropic and Financial Advisors

- 1. Promote Collective Giving Opportunities:** Philanthropic and financial advisors should educate their clients about the benefits of collective giving and assist them in identifying and engaging with suitable collective giving groups or networks aligned with their philanthropic goals and values. Building knowledge, creating social capital, and connecting with the community are significant benefits for donors.
- 2. Learn from Collective Giving:** Philanthropic advisors should seek to collaborate with and learn from collective giving organizations and networks. This dialogue can help advance community-centered practices and more equitable and inclusive funding practices.
- 3. Advocate for Policy Changes:** Philanthropic and financial advisors are well-positioned to understand the regulatory environment. Many in collective giving see the potential for their members to grow in their philanthropic engagement. Advisors should advocate for policies that promote broad philanthropic engagement and equitable and inclusive philanthropic practices, including tax incentives for collective giving.

## For Academics

- 1. Conduct Research on Collective Giving:** Academics should conduct ongoing research on collective giving to deepen the understanding of its impact, effectiveness, and potential for advancing community wellbeing, particularly building diverse perspectives within various cultural and geographic contexts around the globe. This should include translational work to ensure lessons drawn from collective giving.
- 2. Capture and Share Best Practices:** Academics should evaluate best practices in collective giving, including governance structures, decision-making processes, and impact assessment methodologies. These studies should in turn inform the development of practical guidelines and standards for effective collective giving.
- 3. Foster Cross-Disciplinary and Inter-Sectoral Collaboration:** Academics should foster cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers of multiple disciplines, practitioners, institutional philanthropy, and policymakers to advance collective giving as a field of study and practice, promoting innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making in a manner that benefits all of philanthropy.

## For Nonprofits and Frontline Social Change Leaders

- 1. Find Local Collective Giving Groups:** Research groups' funding timeline and process as many — but importantly not all — collective giving groups are actively identifying new community-based organizations to give to and many offer ways to get in touch.

- 2. Tap into the Wisdom of Collective Giving:** Nonprofits and other social change groups can apply the principles and practices of collective giving models to their fundraising efforts, such as the focus on learning, democratic decision-making, community building, values alignment, and agency of the group.
- 3. Build Relationships When Funding Comes:** Leaders have an opportunity to build deep relationships and partnerships with local collective giving groups beyond financial gifts. The collective group may be able to offer all manner of support (the full 5Ts).



# Discussion and Conclusion

Consistent with the two prior landscape studies (Bearman, 2007; Bearman et al., 2017), we have found that the collective giving movement continues to grow in terms of the number of people involved, the number of circles, and the resources mobilized, including all of the 5Ts. In addition to providing important data to inform an understanding of the field, through the last landscape study and three subsequent papers (Carboni & Eikenberry, 2018; Bearman & Franklin, 2018; Bearman & Franklin, 2020), the Collective Giving Research Group helped to inspire a convening of giving circle networks at the Johnson Center in 2017: the momentum generated by that research “not only gave the field a roadmap to amplify and empower giving circles and networks — it sparked the genesis of the infrastructure organization, Philanthropy Together” (Krause, 2021). From there, Philanthropy Together went on to launch the first-ever [Global Giving Circle Directory](#) in partnership with Grapevine.

These pages put into evidence the incredible scope and growth of the collective giving movement. In addition, the findings illustrate to all stakeholders that they are connected to one another and each have a role to play in its success. The preceding recommendations are intended to spur greater interest in and awareness of collective giving, and the data and analysis shared are intended to inspire further research into this dynamic and growing field, firmly rooted in the generosity of communities and an unyielding sense of abundance.



I feel the more we listen and learn, and the more we ask questions and reflect, and the more we connect and take action together — the more we'll move forward in our journey toward our collective well-being and our shared liberation. **The collective giving movement has been my catalyst to help build a more just, loving, peaceful, and resilient world where everyone and everything thrives and feels like they belong. I feel so lucky and grateful to be part of this movement ... AND ... I invite you to join us!"**

– Guff Van Vooren, [Social Venture Partners](#)



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## Appendix A: Methodology

The researchers made two firm commitments in undertaking this project: first, to produce research that can drive the participants' own collective action and storytelling efforts; second, the creation and execution of a research design that would ensure meaningful participation from as diverse and inclusive a range of participants as possible. From the start, the researchers worked closely with the staff of Philanthropy Together, the global field catalyst for collective giving, from the initial research design to the execution of its elements. Philanthropy Together's Braintrust — an advisory group of 20 collective giving networks representing various identities within the movement — participated in the development of the surveys and, subsequently, in their dissemination. Many members also participated in interviews and focus groups. The researchers also compiled an extensive list of collective giving groups in the United States, not only to inform recruitment of study participants, but also in an ambitious attempt to identify as many of the currently existing groups as possible in order to estimate the size of the movement, its membership, and the financial resources mobilized since the last landscape was conducted.

The research project began with two surveys: one for collective giving groups and the other for their members. In addition, researchers conducted five focus groups and 21 interviews that prioritized inclusivity and added the nuance and richness possible only via qualitative methods. The development of these instruments is described below and their final versions are included as appendices. The research was conducted with the authorization of Grand Valley State University's Institutional Review Board, which reviews all research protocols involving human subjects and "ensures that the basic rights and welfare of research participants are fostered and protected."<sup>2</sup> All research subjects were at least 18 years of age and residents of the United States. They gave their informed consent to participate across the various data collection methods.

### Surveys

At the end of 2022, as researchers began to design the survey parameters for the two surveys intended to generate quantitative data on the field's landscape, they gathered questions and dissemination suggestions from Philanthropy Together's staff and its Braintrust. The purpose of the group survey was to collect data on the collective giving groups as organizations, and the respondents to this survey were the volunteer leaders or paid administrators of the groups (indicated by Q#). The member survey's purpose was to gather data on the individuals participating in collective giving groups, illuminating their motivations and their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (indicated by MQ#).

As there is no master list of all collective giving groups in the United States, their leaders, nor their members, we could not draw upon a random sample of all groups. We therefore used opt-in surveys resulting in a convenience or non-probabilistic sample of those collective giving group leaders and members who were aware of and willing to participate in the surveys. In developing list of potential participants to contact via email, we were able to draw upon the following re-

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.gvsu.edu/irb/>

sources: contacts from the 2016 Landscape Study; the [Global Giving Circle Directory](#), which was created by and is maintained by Philanthropy Together and Grapevine; giving circle network member lists; participants in Philanthropy Together events and trainings; public lists of community foundations, women's funds, United Way affiliates, philanthropy serving organizations, and other potential hosts. In addition, we also conducted online campaigns in partnership with the communications teams at the Johnson Center, Philanthropy Together, Braintrust, and their networks.

In order to facilitate wide dissemination and participation, these surveys remained open for approximately four months in the first part of 2023. The research team and Philanthropy Together collaborated to produce cobranded dissemination toolkits for collective giving groups, networks, host institutions, philanthropy-serving organizations, and individual members for broad survey dissemination. Additionally, the partners compiled a dissemination list of philanthropy- and donor-serving groups nationwide and sent emails seeking support in dissemination efforts and/or in completing the surveys themselves. To engage the Braintrust members as partners and ensure that the findings were useful to their initiatives, the researchers produced aggregate reports of the results for those meeting a threshold of participation — depending on the network's size in order to ensure anonymity. Similarly, the researchers allowed group leaders to decide to opt-in and explicitly consent to have their group's data added to the Global Giving Circle Directory.

The number of responses to the surveys was on par with the participation in the 2016 study with a total of 543 responses to the group survey and 1,406 for the member survey.

## Focus Groups and Interviews

Researchers worked with Philanthropy Together to identify participants for the focus groups and interviews with an intentional effort to capture a diversity of voices along various variables, including: length of participation in the movement, demographics, geography, and type of group or organization.

Forty-five minute interviews were conducted with 21 staff or leaders from host organizations of collective giving groups with the goal of deepening our understanding of the infrastructure behind this movement and building awareness regarding the conditions for its success. These insights and experiences would be valuable to help build understanding regarding how organizations are sustaining the collective giving movement in the United States, what opportunities they see to grow the movement, and what challenges they think can prevent its advancement. Interview participants were asked about any aspect of their identity they wanted to share. Here is a summary of the profiles of the participants:<sup>3</sup>

- **Total Participants:** 21
- **Sex:** 17 women, 4 men
- **Race:** 4 Black, 6 White, 2 Latino, 1 Asian, 1 Arab American
- **Religion:** 2 Jewish, 2 Muslim

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<sup>3</sup>Not all numbers add up to the total as not all participants provided all their identifiers.

- **Sexuality:** 3 LGBTQ+
- **Geography:** 3 New York, 5 California, 1 North Carolina, 1 South Carolina, 1 Alabama, 1 Michigan, 1 Minnesota, 1 Arizona, 1 Washington, 1 Mississippi, 1 Massachusetts

Five, 90-minute focus groups were held with collective giving group members to better understand the impact of their participation, particularly around levels of civic engagement, philanthropic activity, and overall wellness. Focus group participants were asked for any aspect of their identity they wanted to share. Here is a summary of the profiles of the participants:<sup>4</sup>

- **Total Participants:** 29
- **Sex:** 26 women, 3 men
- **Race:** 3 AAPI, 8 Black, 5 White, 4 Latino, 1 Native American
- **Religion:** 3 Muslim, 2 Jewish
- **Sexuality:** 2 LGBTQ+
- **Geography:** 4 California, 2 Florida, 1 South Carolina, 1 Vermont, 5 New York, 1 Georgia, 1 Virginia, 1 Arizona, 2 Colorado, 2 Oregon, 1 Nevada, 1 Texas, 1 Nebraska, 1 Pennsylvania, 1 Maryland, 1 North Carolina, 1 New Jersey, 1 Minnesota
- **Collective Giving Tenure:** 6 (2 years or less), 6 (3–5 years), 8 (6–9 years), 7 (10+ years)

## Analysis

To conduct the analysis for the two surveys, the research team initially downloaded the datasets from Qualtrics, where the surveys were hosted. These datasets were then imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. Using SPSS, the team performed various statistical analyses to explore patterns, trends, and relationships within the data, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the landscape of collective giving.

For the focus groups, the research process involved transcribing the recorded Zoom sessions using the transcript tool otter.ai. Following transcription, the team embarked on a thematic iterative coding process, which involved systematically reviewing the transcripts, identifying recurring themes, and coding segments of text accordingly. Through multiple iterations of coding and analysis, the team distilled the rich qualitative data into key themes and insights that informed the report's various sections and appendices.

Regarding the interviews, a similar approach to that employed with the focus groups was taken. However, the interviews were conducted as part of a subsequent research project focusing on the role of infrastructure behind the collective giving movement. Therefore, the transcription and coding of the interviews were deferred until after the focus groups had been analyzed. This decision allowed the research team to leverage the emergent themes and coding scheme from the focus group analysis to inform the coding process for the interviews, ensuring alignment and consistency across both phases of the research.

Upon completing the coding and writing the report, the research team decided that the most compelling manner in which to share their insights was not only to summarize their observations

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<sup>4</sup> Not all numbers add up to the total as not all participants provided all their identifiers.

anonymously but to provide direct quotations. Once the quotations were lightly edited from the transcript, the researchers shared the quotations with the speakers and requested permission to use their words and to identify them. If they accepted, the speakers were given the opportunity to edit their words and determine how they were identified and how their organizational affiliation would be listed.

# Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire - Groups

## Welcome Message

**The purpose of this survey** is to create a national landscape of collective giving groups in the United States. A second survey is designed to capture membership diversity and the impact from group participation.

**Key terms used in the survey** are defined in the following way:

- **Collective Giving Groups:** Made up of “members” with a shared philanthropic purpose who pull together their “resources” and jointly decide where to give their “gift.” Groups are sometimes referred to as: giving circles, chapters or affiliates, and donor or fundraising circles.
- **Members:** Participate in a collective giving group by contributing their resources, regardless of amount or frequency.
- **Resources:** Referred to as the “5Ts”, the forms that donations take can be: time (volunteering), treasure (money), ties (relationships), talent (expertise), and testimony (spreading the word).
- **Gifts:** are philanthropic in nature and are also called donations or grants.

**Please complete this survey if you** are at least 18 years old, reside in the US, and you EITHER lead a group that pools philanthropic resources with others and collectively decides how to give them away OR you provide infrastructure or other support to collective giving groups.

**If you are answering the survey for more than one group**, please complete the survey in its entirety for one group at a time.

**Responses are confidential** and will only be shared in summary form, unless you give your consent to share contact information for your group.

**Time to complete the survey** is estimated to be 20 minutes. You may save the survey and come back later.

Thank you for your participation!

## Section 1: Who is completing this survey?

Please tell us a bit about who is completing this survey.

1. Are you at least 18 years old and are either in or provide support to a collective giving group?
  - Yes
  - No

2. Is the group based in the United States of America?
  - Yes
  - No
3. What is the name of the collective giving group?
  - Our group's name is \_\_\_\_\_
  - My group doesn't have a name
4. Does the group have a website?
  - Yes, our group's website \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
5. Is this group part of a network or larger organization?
  - No
  - Yes, we are part of a network \_\_\_\_\_
  - Yes, we are connected to a host organization \_\_\_\_\_
  - Yes, we are affiliated with a nonprofit for whom we raise funds \_\_\_\_\_
6. Can new members join the group now?
  - Yes, we are open to new members
  - No, we are closed to new members
7. What is your role within this collective? (Select all that apply.)
  - I am a volunteer member/leader of the group
  - I am a paid administrator/organizer of the group
  - I am staff working at the host organization of the group
  - Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
8. Please provide your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
and email address: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Would you like to opt in to share all or part of the information provided thus far to be included in the Global Giving Circle Directory, co-hosted by Philanthropy Together and Grapevine. We are offering you this option to raise the visibility of your group and the movement, making it easier for new potential members and others to find out about you. You are under no obligation to opt in, and the rest of your survey responses will remain completely confidential regardless of your decision.
  - Yes, please share my information. [Link to page for confirmation]
  - No.

## Section 2: Group Membership

Members are those who participate in the collective giving group by contributing their resources (time, treasure, talent, ties, and/or testimony), regardless of amount or frequency.

10. How many members does this group currently have? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which best describes the geographic area from which group members come?

- By and large, our members come from the same...
- City or town, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- County, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- State, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Multi-state or region, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- No single geographical area from which the group's membership comes

12. Beyond geography, is there at least one identity or affiliation shared by most members of the group (e.g., race, gender, profession, or political affiliation)?

- Yes
- No [skip next question]
- Not sure [skip next question]

13. What is the shared identity or affiliation that brings together the members of the group? (Select all that apply.)

- Race and/or ethnicity, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender identity, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Sexual orientation or identify, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Faith, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Disability, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Nationality or immigrant status, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Age, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Political affiliation, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Profession or other network, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Member Contributions

14. If members are expected to make a financial contribution to the group, which best describes this expected contribution? (Select all that apply).

*Our group asks members to annually make a financial contribution that meets or exceeds...*

- A minimum amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- One of our giving levels or tiers, which are \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_% of their income
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_.

15. What is the average contribution from your active members? \_\_\_\_\_

16. In addition to the minimum financial contribution expected of members, do they make other contributions to the group's gift recipient(s)?

*Our members typically also...*

	All	More than half	Half	Less than half	None	Don't know
Give a separate/independent financial gift to recipient(s)						
Volunteer with recipient(s)						
Provide their expertise to recipient(s)						
Share their networks & connections with the recipient(s)						
Fundraise for the recipient(s)						

## Section 4: Group's gift & grantmaking process

17. What types of financial support does the group provide? (Select all that apply.)

*Our group's support is typically for...*

- General, operating, and/or unrestricted costs
- Program and/or project expenses
- Capital or brick-and-mortar development
- Capacity building efforts
- Endowment growth
- Coaching & Leadership Development
- Support for individuals
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

18. What process is used to find potential gift recipients? (Select all that apply.)

*Our group...*

- Disseminates a request for applications and/or proposals to specific recipients
- Releases an open call for applications and/or proposals
- Accepts and/or considers unsolicited applications and/or proposals
- Researches potential recipients
- Asks members to find and/or nominate potential recipients
- Asks community leaders and/or experts to find and/or nominate potential recipients
- Asks our host organization or network to find and/or nominate potential recipients
- Only gives to our host nonprofit
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

19. What application and/or reporting processes does the group use? (Select all that apply)

*Our group...*

- Does not have an application and/or reporting process
- Asks for written applications and/or reports
- Asks for financial statements and/or reports
- Asks for phone calls as part of the application and/or reporting process
- Asks for videos as part of the application and/or reporting process
- Conducts site visits as part of the application and/or reporting process
- Asks for presentations as part of the application and/or reporting process
- Has other application and/or reporting processes \_\_\_\_\_

20. Which best describes how recipients are selected? (Select all that apply.)

- Consensus – members agree on which recipients will receive the group gift
- Members vote and majority rules
- Decision is made by a board or committee of members
- Members nominate; members decide individually whether to fund/gift or not
- Decision is made by the host organization and/or network
- Decision is made randomly, such as by pulling a name out of a hat
- Decision is made by community leaders or an external committee/group
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

21. When finding and/or selecting recipients, how important are the following?

*For our group, it is important that potential recipient organizations...*

	<b>Not a Factor</b>	<b>Slightly Important</b>	<b>Moderately Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Extremely Important</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Have leadership that reflects the community served						
Have leadership from marginalized communities						
Have a budget smaller than \$1 million						
Have community connections and/or feedback loops						
Support marginalized groups						
Serve the same communities from which our members are drawn						
Offer our members engagement and/or volunteer opportunities						
Align with our groups' values and/or areas of interest						

22. How many times a year does the group make gift or grant decisions?\_\_\_\_\_

23. Rate the level of impact that your group felt as a result of the compounding crises of 2020-2021?

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>
We meet virtually more often than we used to					
Our membership numbers shrank					
We shifted our giving focus to prioritize equity					
We increased how much we give					
We gave more frequently					
We are waiting to resume meeting for when we can meet in-person					
We sought out more learning opportunities and trainings					

24. Please provide amounts for the following:

- Total dollars given away by the group in 2022 \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of recipients (people and/or groups) in 2022 \_\_\_\_\_
- Total dollars given away by the group since its founding \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of recipients since its founding \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 5: Gift/Grant Recipients

25. What types of entities does the collective giving group primarily support? (Select all that apply.)

- Individuals
- Informal groups, projects, and/or movement efforts
- Nonprofit organizations (e.g., 501(c)3s)
- Advocacy organizations (e.g., 501(c)4s)
- Community and/or women's funds
- Religious institutions, associations and/or funds
- Scholarship funds
- Schools and/or education foundations
- Social enterprises
- State governments and/or agencies
- Tribal funds
- Venture or investment funds

26. Which geography does the group primarily fund? (Select all that apply.)

- City or town, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- County, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- State or province, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Multi-state or region, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- National scope (United States)

- International, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- No overlapping geographical scope

27. What communities or groups of individuals does the collective giving group primarily fund? (Select all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age groups</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Children and/or youth</li> <li>• Ethnic and racial groups</li> <li>• Asian or Asian American</li> <li>• Black or African American</li> <li>• Latino/a/e/x, Hispanic</li> <li>• Middle Eastern or North African</li> <li>• Native American, Indigenous</li> <li>• Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</li> <li>• White (Non-Hispanic)</li> <li>• Multiple races/ethnicities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and sexual identity</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ people</li> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Men</li> <li>• Boys and adolescents</li> <li>• Girls and adolescents</li> <li>• D/disabled people</li> <li>• System involved individuals</li> <li>• Immigrants and/or Refugees</li> <li>• Communities disproportionately affected by inequitable systems</li> <li>• Military Personnel and/or Veterans</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

28. What are the main causes or issues that the collective giving organization supports? (Select all that apply).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and culture</li> <li>• Animal welfare</li> <li>• Community development             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic mobility</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Leadership, capacity building</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Education             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood education</li> <li>• K-12 Education</li> <li>• Higher education</li> <li>• Adult education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Environment/Climate change</li> <li>• Health             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical and/or mental health care access</li> <li>• Public health</li> <li>• Reproductive health</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal justice reform and/or rights</li> <li>• Protection of labor rights</li> <li>• Promotion of gender equity</li> <li>• Promotion of racial equity</li> <li>• Protection of social rights</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Human services</li> <li>• Disaster relief</li> <li>• International relations &amp; development</li> <li>• Public affairs</li> <li>• Democracy promotion &amp; civic engagement</li> <li>• Public policy</li> <li>• Public/private ventures</li> <li>• Public safety (e.g., abuse &amp; crime prevention)</li> <li>• Religious causes</li> <li>• Other, please specify _____</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

29. Which of the following is/are your group's grantmaking approach to issues of racial and ethnic equity? (Select all that apply).

- Our gifts aim to address racial & ethnic inequities and/or injustices
- Our grantmaking process is designed to promote racial & ethnic equity and/or justice
- Our selection of recipients is done with a racial and ethnic lens
- We do not intentionally seek to address racial and ethnic equity

30. Which of the following is/are your group's grantmaking approach to issues of gender equity? (Select all that apply).

- Our gifts aim to address gender inequities and/or injustices
- Our grantmaking process is designed to promote gender equity and/or justice
- Our selection of recipients is done with a gender lens
- We do not intentionally seek to address gender equity

31. If you center another form of equity (other than racial/ethnic equity or gender equity) in your work, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 6: Group Characteristics & Infrastructure**

32. In what YEAR was the collective giving group started? \_\_\_\_\_

33. How does the group's membership primarily meet?

- Always in-person
- Primarily in-person with a few virtual meetings
- Hybrid meetings, some people in-person and some online
- Almost all virtual meetings
- We had to change how we met because of COVID

34. What activities or learning opportunities are provided to members through the group? (Select all that apply.)

- Speakers or training workshops (e.g., on philanthropy or community issues)
- Leadership training (e.g., on facilitation, communications)
- Mentoring opportunities
- Site visits to groups that you fund
- Meetings with community or group leaders
- Networking and social opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities
- Advocacy or civic engagement opportunities
- Anti-racism / equity learning journey

35. Does the group have any paid staff support?

- Yes
- No

36. What type of organization serves as the institutional host or fiscal agent?

- We don't use a third party - we give directly to the group or to a member who makes the donation
- Technology platform (e.g., Grapevine, GoFundMe, etc.), please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Community foundation, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Nonprofit supporting organization (e.g., a hospital or university foundation), please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Women's fund or foundation, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 7: Membership Demographics

This section asks for demographic information of your group and will help us understand who makes up the collective giving movement. Previous research has shown that the movement is incredibly diverse, and we are committed to elevating its diversity

We respect human diversity in all its forms and understand that this type of information can be sensitive and personal. We also understand that you may not: (1) collect demographic information, or (2) feel comfortable providing or estimating it for others.

If you have this information and are willing to share it or are willing to provide estimates, please proceed to the next question. To skip this section, [click here](#).

37. What is the racial and ethnic makeup of the group's current membership?

	All	More than half	Half	Less than half	None	Don't know
Asian or Asian American						
Black or African American						
Latino/a/e/x, Hispanic						
Middle Eastern or North African						
Native American, Indigenous						
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander						
White (Non-Hispanic)						
Multiple races/ethnicities						
Other, specify _____						

38. What is the gender makeup of the group's current membership?

	<b>All</b>	<b>More than half</b>	<b>Half</b>	<b>Less than half</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Women						
Men						
Trans people						
Genderqueer						
Other, specify _____						

39. What is the LGBTQ+ makeup of the group's current membership?

	<b>All</b>	<b>More than half</b>	<b>Half</b>	<b>Less than half</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
LGBTQ+						
Non-LGBTQ+						
Other, specify _____						

40. What is the D/disability makeup of the group's current membership?

	<b>All</b>	<b>More than half</b>	<b>Half</b>	<b>Less than half</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
D/disabled, living with disabilities						
Non-D/disabled						
Other, specify _____						

41. What age ranges makeup the group's current membership?

	<b>All</b>	<b>More than half</b>	<b>Half</b>	<b>Less than half</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Younger than 18						
18-24 years old						
25-35 years old						
36-44 years old						
45-64 years old						
65 years and older						
Not sure/Don't know						

42. What is the faith orientation of the group's current membership?

	All	More than half	Half	Less than half	None	Don't know
Buddhist						
Christian (any denomination)						
Hindu						
Jewish						
Muslim						
Indigenous Religions						
Pagan / Wiccan						
Sikh						
African, Afro-Religions						
No specific religious affiliation						
Other, specify _____						

43. What is the immigrant makeup of the group's current membership?

	All	More than half	Half	Less than half	None	Don't know
Foreign-born, not born in the US						
First generation, born in the US						
Second generation, born in the US						
Third/+ generation, born in the US						
Other, specify _____						

44. Please provide information on any other unique demographic identities of the members of the giving circle: \_\_\_\_\_

## Closing Message

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

To forward the member survey to your group, use this link.

To sign up to receive a copy of the report emailed to you, use this separate link.

For more information on this research, please visit this page.

# Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire - Members

## Welcome Message

**The purpose of this survey** is to capture the diversity of members of collective giving groups and the impact from group participation. A separate survey is designed to create a national landscape of collective giving groups in the United States.

**Key terms used in the survey** are defined in the following way:

- **Collective Giving Groups:** Made up of “members” with a shared philanthropic purpose who pull together their “resources” and jointly decide where to give their “gift.” Groups are sometimes referred to as: giving circles, chapters or affiliates, and donor or fundraising circles.
- **Members:** Participate in a collective giving group by contributing their resources, regardless of amount or frequency.
- **Resources:** Referred to as the “5Ts”, the forms that donations take can be: time (volunteering), treasure (money), ties (relationships), talent (expertise), and testimony (spreading the word).
- **Gifts:** are philanthropic in nature and are also called donations or grants.

**Please complete this survey if you** are at least 18 years old, live in the United States, and you pool your philanthropic resources with others and collectively decide how to give them away.

**If you are a member of more than one collective giving group**, please complete the survey with the entirety of your collective giving group experience in mind.

**Responses are confidential** and will only be shared in summary form.

**Time to complete the survey is estimated to be 15 minutes.** You may save the survey and come back later.

Thank you for your participation!

## Section 1: Membership in Collective Giving Group(s)

1. Are you currently a member of a collective giving group, like a giving circle?
  - Yes, I am a current member of one collective giving group
  - Yes, I am a current member of more than one collective giving group
  - No, but I have been a member of a collective giving group in the past
2. Do(es) your collective giving group(s) have a name?
  - Yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_ {option to add more than one name}
  - No
3. In what year did you join the first group of which you are/were a member? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In total, how many years have you been/were you a member of one or more collective giving groups? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please rate the following statements around why you decided to join the first collective giving group of which you were/are a member?

*I first joined a collective giving group in order to...*

	<b>Not at all Important</b>	<b>Slightly Important</b>	<b>Quite Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Increase the impact of my giving by pooling my resources with others.				
Build relationships with others who share similar values or identities.				
Form connections within my community. (e.g., local leaders, nonprofit organizations)				
Give to the causes, issues, and communities overlooked by traditional philanthropy				
Learn from others about issues and/or topics of interest to me				
Be more intentional and strategic in my giving				
Work with others to create social and/or systemic change				
Spend time with friends				
Other, specify_____				

6. Please rate these statements based on your experience since you first joined the first collective giving group of which you were/are a member?

*Since I first joined a collective giving group, I have increased ...*

	<b>Not at all Important</b>	<b>Slightly Important</b>	<b>Quite Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
The amount I donate (through my group and beyond)				
The amount of time I volunteer / serve my community (including board service)				
The amount I advocate for issues that matter to me				
My ability to understand my community or issue of focus				
The number and/or strength of relationships I have with community leaders and groups				
My ability to understand philanthropy				
Other, specify_____				

7. Select up to four benefits you have experienced as a result of participating in any of the collective giving groups of which you are/have been a member:

*Participating in the group(s) helped me...*

- Expand and strengthen my personal and/or professional networks
- Increase my connection to a community and/or culture
- Have fun while doing good
- Contribute to social and/or political change
- Feel that I can make a difference
- Increase self-confidence
- Develop my leadership skills
- Learn about philanthropy and organizations
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- I have not experienced any of these benefits

8. Please rate the impact that participation in any of the collective giving groups of which you are/have been a member has had on your:

	<b>Quite Negatively</b>	<b>Somewhat Negatively</b>	<b>No effect</b>	<b>Somewhat Positively</b>	<b>Quite Positively</b>
Confidence to take action to positively change your community					
Feeling that your voice matters on social issues					
Ability to access resources and/or opportunities					
Sense of belonging to a community					
Ability to engage in discussion with whom you might disagree					
Ability to live your values					
Learning about diversity, equity, and/or inclusion					
Ability to live life with purpose					
Ability to live a healthy life (physically, mentally, and/or spiritually)					

9. Please rate the level at which you engage in the following civic engagement activities since you became a member in any of the collective giving groups of which you are/have been a part:

*Since joining a collective giving group, I...*

	<b>Less often</b>	<b>About the same</b>	<b>More often</b>
Discuss social, political, or local issues with friends, family and/or neighbors			
Gather to do something positive for my neighborhood or community			
Share my views about social, political, and/or local issues on social media			
Vote in local elections, such as for mayor or school board			
Attend public meetings, such as zoning or school board meetings, to discuss a local issue			
Contact public officials to express concerns and/or opinions			
Buy or boycott products and/or companies based on the political values and/or business practices of a company			
Belong to community groups, organizations, and/or associations			
Volunteer for an organization or association			
Give money to a political organization, party, and/or campaign			
Give and/or raise money to support a non-profit and/or community organization			

## Section 2: Philanthropy

This section asks about “**donations**” to “**charities**” that serve a variety of purposes. **Charitable organizations** include religious or non-profit organizations that help those in need or that serve and support the public interest. They range in size and exclude political contributions. **Donations** include money, assets, property or goods, whether made directly to the organization, through payroll deduction, or on the internet.

10. During the past 12 months, did you donate through one or more of the collective giving groups of which you are/have been a member?

- Yes, I donated \$\_\_\_\_\_
- No

11. Beyond your donation through the group(s), during the past 12 months, did you donate more than \$25 USD?

- Yes, I donated \$\_\_\_\_\_
- No

12. Beyond your donation through the collective giving group(s), during the past 12 months, did you contribute additional funds to the same organization(s) funded by your group?

- Yes, I donated \$\_\_\_\_\_
- No

13. In addition to any monetary contribution you made to your collective giving group, have you contributed other resources to your group?

- Yes, select all that apply
  - Volunteered your time
  - Provided your expertise
  - Shared your networks & connections
  - Did additional fundraising for the group
  - Spread the word about the group
- No

14. Did you make any other, non-monetary contributions to your group's recipients?

- Yes, select all that apply
  - Volunteered with recipient(s)
  - Provided your expertise to recipient(s)
  - Shared your networks & connections with the recipient(s)
  - Fundraised for the recipient(s)
  - Spread the word about the recipient
- No

## Questions about demographics

This section asks for demographic information and will help us understand who makes up the collective giving movement. Previous research has shown that the movement is incredibly diverse, and we are committed to elevating its diversity.

We respect human diversity in all its forms and understand that demographic information can be sensitive and personal. We understand that you may not feel comfortable providing such information. If you are willing to answer some or all of the following questions, thank you very much and please proceed to the next question. Otherwise, please [click here](#) to skip this section.

15. What is your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese)
- Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, Malaysian)
- South Asian (Bangladeshi, Nepali, Pakistani, Indian)
- Pacific Islander (Tongan, Samoan, Polynesian, Native Hawaiian)
- Black or African American
- Latino/a/e/x or Hispanic

- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White (of European descent)
- Multi-racial
- Another race or ethnicity not listed above \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

16. What is your sexual orientation?

- Lesbian or Gay
- Bisexual or Pansexual
- Asexual
- Heterosexual
- Different Identity (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

17. Which gender identity describes you best?

- Woman
- Man
- Genderqueer
- Trans
- Different Identity (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

18. Do you identify as D/disabled and/or as someone living with a D/disability?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe / Unsure
- Prefer not to state

19. Are you a veteran?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to state

20. What faith identity or religious beliefs do you hold, if any?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Agnostic or Atheist                    | • Pagan / Wiccan   |
| • Buddhist                               | • Sikh   |
| • Christian (any denomination)           | • Spiritual but not religious                              |
| • Hindu                                  | • West African, Afro-Caribbean, or Afro-Brazilian Religion |
| • Jewish                                 | • Other, please specify _____                              |
| • Muslim                                 | • Prefer not to state                                      |
| • Native American or Indigenous Religion |  |

21. What immigrant generation are you in the U.S.?

- Foreign-born
  - What country were you born in? [Select via drop-down menu]
- First generation, born in the U.S.
- Second generation, born in the U.S.
- Third or higher generation, born in the U.S.
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

22. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD Degree
- Technical or Vocational Degree
- Other Graduate Degrees (eg JD)
- No formal schooling
- Prefer not to state

24. What is your current employment status?

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed
- Employed within the "gig" economy
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Student
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

25. What connection do you have to the social change sector? (Select all that apply.)

- I am a donor and/or philanthropist
- I am an activist and/or community organizer
- I work for a nonprofit, community organization, and/or other social change group
- I work in a foundation/philanthropic organization, department, and/or program
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state

A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share a housing unit.

26. Including yourself, many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

27. What best describes your total household income last year?

- 28,000 or less
- 28,001 to 55,000
- 55,001 to 90,000
- 90,001 to 150,000
- 150,001 to 300,000
- 300,001 and above
- Prefer not to state

28. What are the first three digits of your primary household's zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

29. What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Living with partner
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Prefer not to state

## **Closing Message**

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

To complete the collective giving group survey, use this link.

To sign up to receive a copy of the report emailed to you, use this separate link.

For more information on this research, please visit this page.

## Appendix D: Survey Findings on Member Characteristics

**Understanding the membership characteristics of collective giving groups provides valuable insights into how collective giving is mobilizing a wide range of donors and philanthropic assets.** Through a combined analysis of member and group leader survey data (as discussed in Appendix A: Methodology), the multifaceted dimensions of collective giving were explored, shedding light on race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability, and other demographic characteristics. **However, the data also highlight the difficulties in capturing the full diversity of collective giving groups, particularly among marginalized communities.**

Both surveys in this research sought demographic information, for the member survey this implied self-reporting but for leaders this meant reporting on behalf of the members of their groups. In the absence of self-reported data collection, the persons responding to the group survey might have been unwilling to assume that they knew how their members identified. Consequently, the contributions of some identity groups to collective giving initiatives may be under- or over-represented. **This underscores the need for more systematic data collection practices and emergent strategies to ensure better representativeness in findings, as we attempted to do by incorporating qualitative data.** Especially given the scope and scale of this movement — and its remarkable upward trajectory — understanding and recognizing the full contributions of diverse donors should be a priority for the field of philanthropy and how this field presents to the general public.

By acknowledging and actively addressing these challenges in tracking their own diversity, collective giving initiatives can better show how they foster a more inclusive and equitable philanthropic landscape that reflects the rich diversity of communities they aim to serve and from which their members come.

Results of the member survey showed that respondents were predominantly White (Non-Hispanic) (77%), followed by Black or African American (8%), Asian or Asian American (6%), Latino/a/e/x or Hispanic (6%), Multiple Races/Ethnicities (2%), Native American or Indigenous (1%), and Other (1%). The group survey highlighted variations in racial and ethnic composition among groups:

- 6% of groups reported that Asian or Asian American members made up their entire membership, 18% did not know, and 55% said they made up less than half of their membership.
- 12% of groups reported that Black or African American members made up their entire membership, 11% did not know, and 51% said they made up less than half of their membership.
- 3% of groups reported that Latino/a/e/x or Hispanic made up their entire membership, 17% did not know, and 46% said they made up less than half of their membership.

These findings highlight significant differences in racial and ethnic representation within collective giving groups, underscoring the importance of fostering diversity and inclusion across various communities.

Member results were predominantly women (92% identified as women), while 6% identified as men, and 2% as Genderqueer, Trans, or Non-conforming. The group survey further elucidated gender makeup within collective giving groups. 60% of groups with women members reported that all members were women, 24% said women made up more than half of membership, 11% half, 2% less than half, 1% none, and 2% did not know.

Member results were predominantly heterosexual (94%). Results from the group survey reinforced the uncertainty surrounding LGBTQ+ makeup within collective giving groups. Across all options related to sexual orientation, “do not know” was the most common response. However, lesbians were the most represented among the LGBTQ+ identities, with 27% of groups reporting that lesbians account for less than half of their group’s membership. Comparatively, 13% of groups with gay members, and 11% of groups with bisexual members reported similar levels of representation. Yet, over 42% of groups reported that more than half of their membership identified as heterosexual, indicating a potential lack of diversity in sexual orientation within these groups. These findings suggest a need for greater awareness and inclusivity regarding LGBTQ+ representation within collective giving spaces, ensuring that all members feel welcome and valued regardless of their sexual identity.

From the member survey, it was evident that collective giving groups were dominated by Baby Boomers (51%), followed by Generation X (26%), and Millennials (16%). The group survey revealed intergenerational representation within groups, with no age group fully represented across memberships and comparatively lower levels of not knowing this information. An intergenerational dynamic, when present, adds diverse perspectives and experiences, underlining the value of strategies that cater to members of all age groups.

The member survey indicated that 96% of respondents did not identify as D/disabled or as someone living with a D/disability. Conversely, the group survey underscored uncertainty about disability makeup within collective giving groups, with 62% unsure if they had members with disabilities. These findings highlight the delicate nature of asking such questions and the importance of creating accessible and inclusive environments within collective giving groups to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

From the member survey, we found that 44% of respondents held a master’s degree, 37% had a bachelor’s degree, while 7% held an alternative graduate degree (e.g., J.D.) and 6% a doctorate. Additionally, most respondents reported living in households having two members (56%). Two-thirds (76%) of respondents reported being married, which may contribute to high 2022 reported income levels:

- 36% reported a household income between \$150,001 to \$300,000 (corresponding to the highest quintile of U.S. households),
- 28% reported more than \$300,000 (corresponding to the highest 5%), and
- 24% reported between \$90,001 to \$150,000 (the 4th highest quintile) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

From the member survey, it was revealed that 52% identified as Christian, 30% had no specific religious affiliation, and 13% identified as Jewish. “Other” was at 5% and included: Buddhist,

Hindu, Muslim, Indigenous Religions, Pagan/Wiccan, Sikh, and African or Afro-religions. This diversity in religious beliefs among individual members reflects a broader spectrum of faith orientations within collective giving groups. Moreover, a significant portion of groups expressed uncertainty regarding members practicing a religion or having no religious affiliation, highlighting the sensitivity of the issue and a lack of awareness or data on these aspects of diversity within collective giving groups.

Furthermore, among groups that reported knowledge of their members' immigration generation, 24% indicated that first-generation immigrants made up less than half of their membership, marking the highest proportion of first-generation membership reported. Similarly, 22% reported second-generation immigrants comprising less than half of their membership, while 24% reported that third-generation immigrants or higher made up more than half of their membership.

While providing valuable insights into the diverse demographics of these groups, the analysis also highlights areas of uncertainty and likely underrepresentation in the data, emphasizing the need for improved data collection practices at the group and organizational levels and inclusive engagement strategies. As collective giving continues to evolve, a deeper understanding of membership dynamics serves as a cornerstone for fostering inclusivity and equity within philanthropic endeavors.

In terms of the geographic distribution of respondents for the member survey, 666 respondents shared the first three digits of their zip codes, which maintained their anonymity but gave us a sense of where participants were located. The table below features the top ten states in terms of the number of responses, with four states with 50 or more respondents (MD, TX, CA, and MI). Respondents came from 45 states and the District of Columbia.

**Table 5: Number of Member Respondents from Top 10 States**

State	Respondents
Maryland	65
Texas	56
California	54
Michigan	50
Colorado	41
New York	40
Illinois	39
Virginia	31
Florida	30
Arizona	28

While our data does not capture the full geographic spread of the collective giving movement, it suggests that the movement is more fully present and developed along the coasts, the upper Midwest in the Great Lakes region, and the Southwest, especially around Denver. It also suggests that there are areas for growth in some of the states in the Deep South (AL, AR, GA, MS) and the Northern Great Plains ( MT, NV, ND, SD, NE).

# Appendix E: Interview Guide

## Personal Background & Collective Giving Link

- We'd love to get to know you better.
- But first, please say and spell your name for the recording.
- We'd also love to know your pronouns and any aspect of your identity you'd like to share.
- We are not going to make assumptions about you, but we would love to know what diversity of voices we're hearing from in these interviews.

## What do you do?

- What is your connection to collective giving? (e.g., are you a member)
- What's been your experience of collective giving in your life, organization, or community?
- When you think of collective giving, what word comes to mind?
- What role(s) are you holding in this conversation today?
- What is your organization's connection to collective giving? (host, funder, network, etc)

## Infrastructure Role in Supporting Collective Giving

- Why does your organization support collective giving?
- How do you do it?
- Many donors have embraced practices like giving general operating support, reducing or eliminating application and reporting requirements. This movement is sometimes called "trust-based philanthropy," as it emphasizes trust in grant recipients. Does your collective giving group use any of these practices?
- Who do you do it for?

## Who do you do it with?

- Who are your key partners in this work?
- What voices do you notice are present in your partnership spaces?
- What voices do you notice are missing in your partnership spaces?
- How would you describe the relationship between you and your partner organizations? (e.g., in what ways and to what degrees do you partner)
- How would you describe the relationship between your groups (e.g., network)? (e.g., do they share information, are they very connected)

## What do you see is the biggest impact from doing it?

- In terms of impact, have you seen that participation in collective giving has encouraged and led to more giving by group members?

- What do you think is the impact of collective giving on your organization, the group members, and organizations funded by the groups?
- Do you see a link between participation and levels of civic engagement?
- Have you seen evidence of a positive effect on wellness as a result of participation?

### **What's your biggest opportunity and/or obstacle?**

- How could we create an even stronger enabling environment for collective giving?

### **What do you need to overcome it?**

- What is the greatest need for your work moving forward?
- What is the biggest challenge you have in making the case for your organization's support of collective giving?
- What is the state of fundraising for your organization? (Making the case for funding)
- Are there any aspects of member recruitment and/or retention that you are struggling with?
- What would happen if you didn't do it?

### **Wrap-Up**

- Is there anything else you want to tell us that we haven't discussed?
- Any final reflections?

# Appendix F: Focus Group Guide

## Personal Background & Collective Giving Link

- We'd love to get to know you better.
- But first, please say and spell your name for the recording.
- We'd also love to know your pronouns and any aspect of your identity you'd like to share.
- We are not going to make assumptions about you, but we would love to know what diversity of voices we're hearing from in these interviews.
- Why did you join or start your group?
- Are you a current member of a collective giving group?
- How long have you been a member of your group?
- If your group is linked to a particular organization, such as a community foundation or giving circle network, please share their name.

## What's the impact from participating in this group?

### BENEFITS

- What is the most important benefit you feel you've experienced as a result of your participation?
  - Is this why you stay engaged in your group or not?

### DEMOCRACY

- In your own words, what connection do you see between collective giving and your group's level of civic engagement?
- In what ways have you become more or less civically engaged since you joined this group?
- Research has shown that collective giving groups often become places where members can practice democracy-related skills, such as being in conversation with people you disagree with, practicing building consensus, working with others to solve problems, etc. How does this relate to your experience?
- Do you think your participation in this group has contributed to your learning around equity and justice? What about trust-based philanthropy?

### PHILANTHROPY

- Has your giving changed since you joined your group? Here, we'd like to focus on monetary contributions here. (Treasure)
- Do you give more or less?
- Do you give to different causes or groups?

- Has your network of philanthropic partners and advisors changed since you joined your group? In what ways?
- Beyond funding, in what ways do you support your grantees?
- Have your levels and or types of volunteerism changed since you joined your group? (Time and Talent)
- In what ways do you leverage your connections to support the organizations that your group funds? (Ties)
- Do you help increase your grantees' visibility, and in what ways? (Testimony)
- What is the one thing about your understanding of philanthropy that has changed since you joined your group?
- In your own words, what do you think it is about collective giving participation that ends up affecting the philanthropy of its members?

## WELLBEING

- Typically, we think of the following dimensions to wellbeing: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, vocational, financial, and environmental. Given that “wellness” or “wellbeing” are subjective, we'd like to first ask each of you, in a few words what are components of your wellbeing, what do you need to feel well?
- Based on your own understanding, has participation in your group had an effect on your overall level of wellbeing? In what ways?

## Monday/Wednesday/Friday The who and what of your group

- Does your group have a shared identity among its members?
- What voices do you notice are present in your group and which would you like to include?
- In what way does your group work to engage marginalized communities?
- Do you find that this way of giving is particularly resonant with your community?

## Tuesday/Thursday Context questions

- What effect did COVID and the compounding crises we all lived through in 2020-2021 have on your group?
- What types of support from your host or network have you found the most powerful for your group?
- Are there any kinds of support from your host or network that you feel you are missing?
- What do you think is the future of collective giving and what could get in the way of it reaching its full potential?

## Wrap-Up

- Is there anything else you want to tell us that we haven't discussed?
- Any final reflections

## Appendix G: Timeline of Key Activities

<b>Q3 2022</b>	<b>Research Initiated</b> , conversations with ecosystem actors of various roles took place to ground the research in the movement's current direction and identify the movement's areas of interest to incorporate into the research.
<b>Q4 2022</b>	<b>Survey questionnaires were developed</b> beginning with a facilitated conversation with the Braintrust to identify the data that they needed to advance their work. Draft questionnaires were finalized and plans for recruiting subjects and safeguarding data were submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Grand Valley State University.
<b>Q1 2023</b>	Using online member directories of philanthropy serving organizations and networks, <b>survey dissemination lists were created</b> . Additionally, a snowball sampling technique <sup>5</sup> was employed. Surveys were left open for four months, aiming to encourage and facilitate broad participation.
<b>Q2 2023</b>	<b>Surveys were closed and data underwent thorough cleanup procedures</b> . Reports were developed for Braintrust networks that met a participation threshold, prioritizing community utility and affirming the commitment to participatory frameworks. The aim was to ensure actionable insights from the research were accessible to participating communities
<b>Q3 2023</b>	<b>Preliminary results were presented at national and regional philanthropy conferences</b> , <sup>6</sup> serving a dual purpose. Firstly, <b>to promote recruitment for focus groups and interviews</b> . Secondly, <b>to engage institutions interested in operationalizing emerging findings</b> . The <b>collective giving group mapping efforts to calculate the scale of the movement began</b> .
<b>Q4 2023</b>	<b>Preliminary results were mapped for under-represented voices and regions</b> in order to drive intentional inclusion in the meaning-making qualitative portions of the study, the focus groups, and interviews. <b>Outreach took place and the focus groups and most of the interviews were conducted</b> .
<b>Q1 2024</b>	<b>Rescheduled interviews were conducted, estimations of the size of the movement were finalized, the report was drafted, and attribution permission requests were sent and received</b> .  The interviews revealed that organizations within the movement are significantly underfunded yet remarkably effective. Subsequently, <b>a decision was made to interview institutional funders for a comprehensive research paper highlighting the significance of funding the collective giving ecosystem</b> to demystify philanthropy by illustrating the challenges in advocating within institutions for better support, amplification, and collaboration with collective giving groups. This research is scheduled for completion by the end of 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. It is often used when the population being studied is hard to access or rare, making traditional random sampling difficult.

<sup>6</sup> Preliminary results were presented at CHANGE Philanthropy's Unity Summit, the WE Give Summit and the Council of Michigan Foundation's Annual Conference, all in 2023.

# Appendix H: Calculating the Scale of the Movement

Arriving at a fair and accurate estimate of the size of the movement was an essential part of this research. The first step in that process was to compile as complete a list as possible of existing collective giving groups. That list played a vital role in survey dissemination and the recruitment of diverse voices in our intentional inclusion efforts. It also contributed to the ability to assess the breadth and scale of the movement and to complement that with the depth of perspective gained from collective giving leaders and members. In the absence of a single source of information, this effort was incredibly ambitious and took approximately six months to complete.

## 1. Search History

Research began by identifying and collecting all available lists of groups pulled together from various sources. On June 30, 2023, Grapevine, the largest online collective giving platform, provided a download of the Global Giving Circle Directory, which was built in partnership with Philanthropy Together. The networks of collective giving groups that form the Braintrust for Philanthropy Together provided their lists of groups on June 14, 2023. The group names from both surveys (group and member) were reviewed by Braintrust staff to identify those in their networks and reduce survey margin of error when calculating network affiliation amongst respondents. Additionally, Philanthropy Together provided a dataset of media mentions of groups, from April 1, 2020, the organization's founding, to October 1, 2023. These datasets were combined and duplicate data were eliminated. In addition to the names of groups, the following information was collected about each group whenever it was available:

- Establishment year
- Cumulative giving (all years since establishment)
- Annual giving
- Number of members

Since the focus of this research was to collect data since the last landscape study was published in 2017 with 2016 data as it's most recent, data between 2017–2023 were assessed. Where data were unavailable, the following steps were taken to estimate the size of the field.

## 2. Calculating Missing Data Points

With incomplete information for a majority of the collective giving groups, there was the challenge of how to estimate missing data by extrapolating from the limited accessible data.

If there was an establishment year plus any giving information, the calculation methodology was:

- With a total giving amount, it was divided by the number of years since establishment and assumed an equal giving amount per year.
- If there was an amount donated in one year, the same amount was assumed for each year since establishment.

In cases where no establishment year could be ascertained: first, the number of groups missing establishment years was calculated and used as “n”. Using the ratios from the survey responses for Q32 in the group survey, “In what YEAR was the collective giving group started?” (See Table 6), the numbers within the same table were imputed.

An understanding of the movement’s growth trajectory was devised by drawing from the data in Table 1, after which establishment years were assigned proportionally. So, for 6% of those missing establishment years, the assigned year was 2000. For 19% of those missing establishment years, the assigned year was a range between 2001 and 2010. Then, the decade was divided into quartiles and assigned establishment years accordingly (2001, 2004, 2007, 2010). For 56% of those missing establishment years, established years were estimated between 2011 and 2020. Then, the decade was divided into quartiles and assigned establishment years accordingly (2011, 2014, 2017, 2020). For the 19% established between 2021-2023, the median/mean of 2022 was used.

**Table 6: Calculations for Groups Missing Start Years, Using Ratios from Responses to Survey Q32, “In what YEAR was the collective giving group started?”**

<b>Survey Response Percentage</b>	<b>Survey Response Start Year Range</b>	<b>Year Inputted for Groups Missing Start Year</b>
6%	< or = 2000	2000
19%	2001–2010	¼ = 2001 ¼ = 2004 ¼ = 2007 ¼ = 2010
56%	2011–2020	¼ = 2011 ¼ = 2014 ¼ = 2017 ¼ = 2020
19%	2021–2023	2022

If the number of members within a group was unknown, it was calculated second. First, the number of groups that were missing the count of their members was determined and used as “n.” The percentages in Table 7 were inputted the numbers within the same table. This ratio was used from the survey responses for Q10 in the group survey, “How many members does this group currently have?”

To minimize the margin of error, the groups were ordered by city names so that there would be a mix of establishment year and member amounts. For the 34% of groups that had less than or equal to 25 members, 25 was used as the number of members. For the 12% of groups that had between 26-50 members, the median was used. For the 16% of groups that had between 51-100

members, the median was used. For the 24% of groups that had between 101-250 members, the median was used. For the remaining 14% of groups that had more than 250 members, 250 was used as the number of members.

**Table 7: Calculations for Groups Missing the Number of Members, Using Ratios from Responses to Survey Q10, “How many members does this group currently have?”**

<b>Survey Response Number of Members Percentage</b>	<b>Survey Response Number of Members Range</b>	<b>Number Inputted for Groups Missing Number of Members</b>
34%	< or = 25	25
12%	26-50	38.5
16%	51-100	76
24%	101-250	186
14%	>250	250

If the annual amount given by the group was unavailable, this was calculated last. To calculate the amount donated per member through the group, \$1,000 was used, which was the median for MQ11b from the member survey and the mode for Q15 from the group survey.<sup>7</sup> This was multiplied \$1,000 by the number of members to get how much the group gave through member contributions.

Additionally, member survey results showed that 39% of members gave an additional contribution to the organization/entity that their group funded (MQ13). The average reported donation by respondents was \$17,948, the median (or response that was at the midpoint of the distribution) was \$3,000, and the mode or most frequent response was \$1,000. In order to maintain the range of responses, the median was selected. The subsequent calculation addressed how many members within each group equal 39% of the group (MQ13) and multiplied that number by \$3,000 to capture the additional contribution to the same organization funded by their group. The total amount given by the group and the 39% additional were added to equal one year of giving for each group. This amount was used as the figure for each year since establishment.

<sup>7</sup> The decision to use these data points was made based on the following analysis. MQ11b asked members “How much did you donate, in USD through one or more of the collective giving groups of which you are/have been a member” The average (the mean) reported donation was \$4,272, the range midpoint (the median) was \$1,000, and the most frequent response (the mode) was \$400. To determine which would be most statistically significant to use, we looked at the responses for the group survey Q15 which asked, “What is the average financial contribution from your active members, in USD?” When looking at the range of reported contributions (\$1 - \$69,000), the average contribution (the mean) for Q15 was \$2,852. The most frequently occurring (or mode) average contribution was \$1,000, and with more than 50 groups reporting an average contribution of about that amount we felt that was the best figure to use. (The median for Q15 was \$500.)

## Appendix I: In Their Own Words...

During the interviews and focus groups, the researchers had the honor of speaking with 50 leaders from the collective giving movement. As described in the Appendix A: Methodology, the sessions were transcribed and coded. The researchers subsequently asked the participants if they would give us permission to quote their words directly and identify them. Within the confines of the report, the researchers drew upon and quoted many of their observations; however, they provided many more insights and reflections than were included in the report. After 50 people had shared their stories of struggle and generosity, their thoughts on the power of collective giving, and their hopes for the future with us, it seemed wasteful and somewhat selfish not to share their words with a wider audience, especially those seeking to strengthen and advance collective giving. Acting in a spirit of abundance, the researchers decided that it was important to share their words with the readers of the report.

This section provides all the quotations that the researchers were granted permission to use in the report. They are organized by the themes used in coding the transcripts: Shared Identity; Philanthropy; Future of Collective Giving; Wellbeing; Democracy/Advocacy; Benefits/Reasons to Join; Crises (COVID, Racial Justice); and, Background/Link to Collective Giving. Each quotation is identified by the name of the speaker and their affiliation. Due to the overlapping nature of the themes, some quotations appear in more than one section.

### Shared Identity



Through our organization, we have a teen grantmaking program, where we teach youth about philanthropy, including how to do a needs assessment and fundraise. Their goal was raising at least \$5,000, which they granted to youth led organizations in the community. They call themselves philanthropists. In all of the studies about communities of color and philanthropy, I have yet to see one that includes Arab Americans. And that's partly because we're not counted in the Census, which is incredibly unfortunate. We did a study among our donors, and we saw that the younger the respondent was, the more likely they were to identify themselves as a philanthropist. So, it's working. But I think people are still very uncomfortable with that term. They think it's reserved only for Melinda Gates, and MacKenzie Scott, and the people who can give billions of dollars, but we want them to know, when you can give \$100 with 99 of your friends, you're a philanthropist."

- Tamara El-Khoury, Director, [Center for Arab American Philanthropy](#)

““

It was changing what's normally a negative narrative about [Arab Americans] to a positive and showing the community that we care about you. We're generous, and we care about what you're doing, and we want to support that work. And so that is one of the many reasons why I love collective giving.”

- Tamara El-Khoury, Director, [Center for Arab American Philanthropy](#)

““

This was really pivotal for me, because growing up, like many immigrant communities, while we are very generous, it has not been in a formal or strategic way. And so, I did not grow up with the word philanthropy. We were helping out new immigrants who came here and formed this informal community and network but there wasn't this formal strategic way of giving. There's so much growth and so much potential. I'm really honored to be a part of it.”

- Tamara El-Khoury, Director, [Center for Arab American Philanthropy](#)

““

One of the great joys and pleasures of doing this work for so long is getting to meet people who are doing collective giving in a cultural context, their own cultural context.”

- Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet July 2025), on the power of collective giving

““

We created the circles because no money was going to Latino nonprofits and nobody had written us a check to seed the Latino Community Foundation. So the F word in our name... foundation, gave us a sense of power, but there was really no money behind it. Our Latino Giving Circle movement grew out of our desire to help nonprofits. In the last three years, we raised \$30 million to seed our own endowment. And In the last 8 years, we raised \$100 million. I think our giving circle members and our unique approach to community philanthropy positioned us for that type of growth! Our members fell in love with our model and our values. The nonprofit community felt seen by us, and very proud of us. Eventually funders took notice of what we were building. Everyone opened doors of opportunity that we were able to seize. It was a communal effort. We did that together.”

- Masha V Chernyak, Former Senior Vice President at the [Latino Community Foundation](#)



In conversations around collective giving, it's important that you understand the cultural spaces that already have collective giving happening in communities. I talked to somebody in the East African community about how collective giving occurs there and how it supports their community. I was talking to somebody who was Korean about their community's collective giving. There is an opportunity to honor the historical, cultural aspects of collective giving that allows the communities to actually function and to amplify that. ... Increasingly, there is interest by the individuals that have DAFs to be more in tune with the community. ... Collective giving allows people to shift the power to those more proximate. Philanthropic services is now offering collective giving as an option. When somebody opens a DAF, they can direct where it goes, or we can find a group of community members that helps direct where it goes. It is a real tangible, simple way to start shifting some of the power. It's a way to highlight the giving that is already happening. These are not new. Anytime I talk to somebody, "Oh, that reminds me of how my grandma used to collect money for the neighborhood." So we need to amplify that, because that worked. Shine a light on it, and get more people to pour their resources into it."

- Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)



Culturally, Latinas are raised to be very compassionate, and help our neighbors who are sick and give all of ourselves. But yet, we're not considering ourselves as philanthropists. So how do we change that conversation? Over the last 10 years, it's been empowering to be able to give collectively and have a voice in where those funds go. It meant a lot to me and other members with regards to our leadership development ... because it requires a lot of self-education and confidence in using our voice."

- Rita de la Fuente, [Latina Giving Circle](#)



American Muslims put money where their heart is. And the data also show that it's not just to Muslim led causes, it's to causes outside of our faith: to the universities we attended, to hospitals and health clinics serving the local community, to food banks. And this is also reflective through the giving at American Muslim Community Foundation (AMCF). And one of the reasons why we feel it's important to give through AMCF is because it provides the American nonprofit community and landscape with the understanding that the American Muslim community cares. If I give through AMCF, it's clear that the American Muslim community cares about Amnesty International, about the Red Cross, about Doctors Without Borders, and so on, and so forth. So, you know, we've been able through the donor advised funds and giving circles to distribute over \$11 million to more than 800 nonprofits since 2017."

- Muhi Khwaja, Co-Founder & Chief Development Officer, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)

“

It's important for us to be more vocal and share our experience as part of the circles. When I first started, I used to talk to every single woman about what my experience was with the circle, and that's how I recruited about 10 members in less than two years. I went back to the circle and said, 'You all need to start doing the same. You need to share your enthusiasm. You need to share this joy that you feel by being part of the circle with whoever comes your way. You spread the word and we'll get more members.' That's how the other circle started to grow because at some point we didn't fit where we were doing with the women, so then there was a men's circle and the LGBTQ circle and all the circles that came to happen ... Let's have a bigger impact by sharing the experience. That's important - the storytelling piece and the power the storytelling has to grow the movement."

- Maria Alvarez, Founding Member, San Francisco Latina Giving Circle, Latino Giving Circle Network®, [Latino Community Foundation](#)

“

We are an exclusively Muslim organization simply because, by nature of collecting zakat, the assumption is built in that you're not only a practicing Muslim, but you're practicing to the extent that you are also fulfilling this one of the five main pillars. Zakat, in a nutshell, is an annual mandate where 2.5% of your savings and your net worth is given as charity. I don't think there's any momentum behind reimagining the collective as a non-denominational organization because this type of charitable giving is built into our religious practice. Our collective doesn't have to convince participating households to give - we all would be doing that anyway because of our adherence to the practice of zakat. We just harness the magnified impact of larger zakat gifts by unifying something that is happening in all our households anyway."

- Rabea Chaudhry, Bay Area Collective Giving in San Francisco, California, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)

“

We just celebrated our 10 year anniversary last week and also celebrated with our grantees. I say grantees, but they're really community members, Latina Giving Circle members, people that we work beside all the time. I'd say that distinction is pretty blurred in the group, which is one reason why I love it. One of my favorite things about being part of Latina Giving Circle is that there is no discussion about membership dues, or how much anyone should be paying, it's a gift that's meaningful to you. We have members who are kids, we have members who are men, everyone is welcome."

- Alison Aragon, Member of the [Latina Giving Circle](#) in San Diego



We expanded our educational offerings that year [2020] to try to create opportunities for people to connect. We thought, ‘They’re at home, we have zoom, we have lots to share.’ We had the opportunity to talk about many important issues, because we’re in a majority white city in a majority white women’s collective giving circle that’s been trying to diversify for the last four years....People were stepping forward and saying, ‘I care about this too, and I want to join.’ We had a little bit of a change in our giving circle. It’s more diverse now in terms of age, ethnicity, and race. We have a stronger sense of connection now in that the people who are still with us, they really care about racial equity. While we are concerned about all forms of equity, but we put racial equity first. It’s been a turning point for us. As horrible as that time was, there was a lot of learning that came out of it. And I think we’re going to be able to make more important contributions as a result of it.”

– Tammy Wilhoite, Coordinating Council Chair, [ninety-nine girlfriends](#)

## Philanthropy



We have a theory in the south, and this may be true nationwide. ... we feel like the historical narrative around giving has been white man of wealth is where money comes from. And that’s just not true. ... women have been generating their own wealth for many years. And in the south, there’s a lot of generational wealth that females inherit or marry into, ... but there’s a lot of wealth that females are generating on their own, since women are ... have taken over the marketplace, I would say. And so we just feel like it’s a movement that has been building in the south and then Mississippi, but it just hasn’t surfaced to the forefront ... we feel like there’s more women who have their own wealth now, because they’ve built it, or they have earned it. And they want to give it in a way that it’s meaningful to them, versus what others are directing them and how to give. Also, thinking about women of color and BIPOC women who have generated their own wealth, and are giving in ways that other underserved communities have not been able to get resources from people who represent them. ... Now we’re seeing giving in substantial amounts coming from people that don’t look like me, too. Because they’re generating their own wealth, and then they’re giving it back to the communities from which they come.”

– Jamie Rasberry, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships, [Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy](#)



It’s similarly about redefining, challenging, and reclaiming the idea of who is a philanthropist, who is a donor, who is a giver, who is charitable, who is generous, and what counts as generosity, charitable giving, philanthropy.”

– Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet July 2025), on the power of collective giving



We are primarily focused on empowering our giving circles to make meaningful impact in their local communities, with being community-based as their focus. We're supporting them to help traditionally under-resourced organizations that have limited capacity and are often overlooked by traditional philanthropy. Through convenings and best practice sharing, we emphasize that each giving circle operates uniquely. Meaning, the way a giving circle in Birmingham operates, is not the way to operate your circle in Denver. The demographics of my giving circle does not have to be the demographics of your giving circle. We provide our circles with a flexible blueprint that allows them to tailor their approach based on member needs, life stages, focus areas, and passions. Some circles prefer a casual approach, making grant decisions over meals, while others follow a more formal RFP process with site visits. There is no right or wrong way to operate, but there's a wealth of lessons to be learned from each circle. Ultimately, our goal is to empower these circles to profoundly impact the organizations that need it most in their communities."

– Marsha Morgan, [Community Investment Network](#)



They [the community foundation leaders/trustees] were really intentional about making this collective giving investment. It was about democratizing philanthropy and shifting the narrative of who is the giver and receiver. That was a true investment, both in my position, and an understanding of the work that needs to be done."

– Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)



We need to do more because they understand philanthropy, they have lived experience, they understand the problems in the communities, where they serve, and they are closest to the solutions because of it. They know the nonprofits that have produced the greatest impact, they invite them to the grant cycles. We just see those organizations grow, some of them have been able to purchase their own buildings."

– Kim Covington, Vice President of Community Initiatives at [Arizona Community Foundation](#)



The speaker shared the impact of their giving circles with donors, leading to a significant partnership. One of the donors, holding the largest fund at this community foundation, is now collaborating with the giving circles. They are investing and nearly matching the investment made during each grant cycle. For instance, if the giving circles awarded \$75,000 to nonprofits (around \$10,000 each), this donor is matching or fulfilling the nonprofit's budget for a specific project, effectively doubling the impact of the gifts. This collaboration is seen as highly positive and beneficial."

- Kim Covington, Vice President of Community Initiatives at [Arizona Community Foundation](#)



A lot has happened in 10 years to the small group that we started, and I am really proud of all of us ending up as leaders in our community. We've seen members that have grown with us and have increased their gifts as they've grown in their own careers."

- Rita de la Fuente, [Latina Giving Circle](#)



I'm being more conscious about shopping and buying local. I'm on the hunt for small, women-owned businesses that might be interested in our grants, and how can I support them by shopping there for something as simple as cards. Instead of going to Dollar Tree, and giving whoever owns Dollar Tree all my money, let me just go buy a card that somebody actually spent time to make and create....ensuring that I'm doing my research and investigation into what those businesses are. It's that awareness factor, being a part of an organization that's interested in giving and being very specific to where we're giving. This has made me more interested in ensuring that everything else I'm doing is focused on that, too. That I'm supporting BIPOC businesses, and in particular, women-owned businesses."

- Deirdre Murphy, Founder, [AttaGirl Giving Circle](#)



Since our target grantee partner is an emerging black woman-led business, what we're hoping to provide for them is amplification of their business and in-kind support with marketing. If it's product development, giving them mentors in the space who can really coach them around those specific things that get in the way of a minority business getting off the ground. We're hoping to give them all of the things that they need for that seed to break through the soil."

- Shannon Jeffries, [The Tanna Fund at Ipàdè](#)

““

We have a couple of friends who want to support conversations around the trauma of money and how that seeps into your business, especially as Black women in the U.S., navigating wealth and the lack of it. That kind of relationship to money also shows up in your business, and how you handle your business finances.”

– Shannon Jeffries, [The Tanna Fund at Ipàdè](#)

““

We create a running list of community events that our grantees are offering...When I show up to these community events, I don't show up as a program officer who's doing compliance monitoring or doing some digging into the organization. I'm truly, genuinely there so that I can be in community with the people who are attending.”

– Raksmeymony (Rex) Yin, [Asian Mosaic Fund Giving Circle](#)

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So in terms of equity and justice, one thing that we did with our grant application was require the organization to provide a non-discrimination policy and an anti-hate policy. And if they did not have one, we would provide the resources to help them craft those policies.”

– Clinton Bublitz, Lancaster County LGBTQ+ Giving Circle Advisory Committee, [Lancaster County Community Foundation](#)

““

Once we give, others give. Oftentimes philanthropy is so nervous about giving to an organization or nonprofit that hasn't received any funding from anybody else before. Once we give, it shows that we vetted the organization, they are financially stable, and all the things that people look for in philanthropy.”

– Jill C. Coleman, Endowment Chair and Past Chair, [SisterFund](#)



It's been exciting to move beyond asking about how we define and measure success and recognizing that the act of investing in a project is a win by itself. It's been a useful antidote for me that I didn't realize I needed. We are freed from the tyranny of having to prove that something is the 'best' and to feel the joy in saying, 'We like it and we're excited.' There's something beautiful there. And we learn and that's also great. We learn in the process of giving instead of holding our money tight while we hunt for the 'best.'"

– Chitra Aiyar, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#)



I couldn't say the word philanthropy at first. I remember getting tongue-tied. Now it rolls off my tongue. ... Giving circles are hot now. Seventeen years ago, people were like, 'What the hell are you talking about?' Today, it's a little bit different."

– Joy B. Webb, [Circle of Joy Giving Circle](#)



It's not just the grant. Our giving circle will attend events such as a dance presentation for a cultural group, a mentoring event for young Latinas, or a volunteer event. We're attending an event this week. We lift our grant partners' work up. It has highlighted for me all the giving that is there already that people don't notice or honor."

– Latina philanthropy professional and giving circle member



Our giving circle is a little bit different in its construction in the sense that it came out of folks who were already working in the nonprofit sector... People are coming in with a vision of how their participation in the Latina giving circle gives them the opportunity to do something that they don't get to do in their day job, or in the way they move through the nonprofit sector. Because we have recruited from that space a lot, we have the benefit of a lot of the support that we can offer outside of the grant is in pro bono consulting and really high level support that can be offered or nurturing of connections. ...My personal shift that's happened with the circle is it's offered me essentially, this much broader, more expansive way to have impact in my community. If I learned about an organization and for whatever reason, they're not a fit with wherever I happen to work at the time, I don't have to file that away as, 'Well, that was nice to know.' I can be more thoughtful, and I have this whole other venue that I can use to enact change."

– Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships, [The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)



The power dynamics in institutional philanthropy are so different from those in collective giving - being able to practice and relearn how to sit with power. Thinking about the ways that institutions have taught me, 'Power is not okay.' It's being able to flip that on its head and think 'what are positive ways to use power?' The power analysis part of collective giving has to be a part of whatever the next phase of this work is so that we don't just reproduce what existed to begin with."

- Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships, [The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)

## Future of Collective Giving



Technology could help us unlock funds from communities around the world for communities around the world."

- Emily Rasmussen, Founder & CEO, [Grapevine](#)



In conversations around collective giving, it's important that you understand the cultural spaces that already have collective giving happening in communities. I talked to somebody in the East African community about how collective giving occurs there and how it supports their community. I was talking to somebody who was Korean about their community's collective giving. There is an opportunity to honor the historical, cultural aspects of collective giving that allows the communities to actually function and to amplify that. ... It is a real tangible, simple way to start shifting some of the power. It's a way to highlight the giving that is already happening. These are not new. Anytime I talk to somebody, 'Oh, that reminds me of how my grandma used to collect money for the neighborhood.' So we need to amplify that, because that worked. Shine a light on it, and get more people to pour their resources into it."

- Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)

“

The biggest loss would be that philanthropy would just be all about rich white guys again, or rich, white dead guys again. I also know that we're going to keep doing it. Tandas are going to exist and gehs are going to exist and tams are going to exist as random particles out there. And we'll figure out how to turn those things into philanthropic charitable vehicles. But we're all going to have to do it alone again. We're all going to just have to figure it out ourselves. And there will be no one to help us, no one to send people for the one-on-one kind of resources. We will just have to go back to helping everyone one by one. Having a hub organization where people can go, a meeting space with a town square for giving circles, is so useful for the sector.”

– Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet July 2025), on the power of collective giving

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When somebody dies you know you're gonna see a GoFundMe for their funeral. Rather than view them as opposing forces, what are the opportunities to leverage them to identify needs in our community and getting people to go to that collective aspect? If we've seen that you've given to three funerals in the past year for GoFundMe, are you interested in joining this group about community-based violence? With all the information being collected, they could be used as tools. They define how society is broken. They could somehow be utilized to get people to invest more upstream, I think that there would be a cool opportunity there.”

– Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)

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Collective giving serves as a force multiplier for the community foundation, leveraging its impact by sharing stories and connecting with donors and corporations. One example is the Youth World Education Project, which received its first \$5,000 grant from the Black Philanthropy Initiative, a circle at ACF. After this initial support and the success story shared out, the nonprofit began receiving substantial awards of \$100,000 or more from various donors including those at ACF. Capacity is needed to develop a strategy and best approach to replicate this force multiplication across all the circles.”

– Kim Covington, Vice President of Community Initiatives at [Arizona Community Foundation](#)



We want [young giving circle members] to grapple with these things. We want them to think about it so that it becomes ingrained in their everyday experiences as they move through life and get to become professionals and have financial capacity to give in different ways.”

– Wayne Green, Former Executive Director of [Honeycomb](#) and Founder of KAVOD Giving Circle



What do I aspire for in our giving circles? That other individuals, organizations, and companies would trust us with their giving, and know that we’re responsible, we’re relevant, we have real data. Maybe it’s not hard data but it’s the real data that’s important to inform these decisions. I hope that we’re trusted more by other organizations so that our very deeply informed giving grows.”

– Latina philanthropy professional and giving circle member

## Well-being



Because we’ve been meeting fairly regularly for a long time, we’ve gone through a lot of life together. We’ve had divorces and marriages and births and deaths and jobs and travel and life. And someone just became a grandma, and someone just lost her mom. We’ve experienced a lot of life together in this kind of extra-familial community, and I think it’s easy to take for granted. This kind of community becomes especially important when there’s trauma.”

– Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet July 2025), on the power of collective giving



What it did for me was give me a purpose...to wrangle these women into a cohesive group, and then find out how much we care about each other.... It is wellness, for me, to have this and do it the way we collectively choose to do it. And it’s just been great. As far as the wellness of the community, they’re really starting to tap into what we’re doing. I would love to see other circles start. That’s not something I’m going to take on, although I’d be happy to give advice.”

– Gail Nunziata, The Athena Giving Circle



A big one too, is just friendship. It's hard to make friends as adults sometimes. Wanting connection with people and friendships is a big reason people do join any type of giving group. In some cases, I call them mentorships. People that have become very close to my heart, who I know I can call or text or ask for support or ask for advice. A lot of that is from spending time together in a space and working towards this goal."

- Alison Aragon, Member of the [Latina Giving Circle](#) in San Diego



We did a ripple effect mapping, and what really excited me is that people didn't talk about the money they gave away. They talked about how participating in a giving circle caused them to look at their world differently. ... They didn't know the importance of having culturally specific nonprofits, where two orgs seemingly addressed the same issue, but they served two different cultures. ... and other people were like, 'I've never thought of power dynamics, I've never seen myself in a place of power and privilege. And so now I think more about the power dynamics as I enter the room.'"

- Sara Lueben, Director of Collective Giving, [Minneapolis Foundation](#)

## Democracy/Advocacy



Philanthropy is one arena for civic engagement, and giving circles are a part of that. We need to make that upstream argument about their relevance for democracy. It's like a subsection of a subsection of a subsection of philanthropy, but what if there are a million giving circles around the country, meeting in living rooms? Each of them is a little laboratory for democracy. And within each of those living rooms, around each of those kitchen tables, there are groups of Americans jostling about, making arguments, pros and cons and arguing, and some leaving and some coming back, and coming together to do good work in communities, whether it's planting trees, or fixing playgrounds, or helping people, or feeding homeless, whatever the thing is, it almost doesn't matter. It's the exercising of that civic engagement muscle that we need desperately in this country. If there's ever a time that we need that exercising of our democracy muscles, it is right now. And giving circles are not the only way to do that, but they are a good way to do that, and I don't know who funds that. I know we're going to keep doing it, almost regardless of the funding."

- Hali Lee, founder, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#); Founding Partner, [Radiant Strategies](#); and author of *THE BIG WE* (Zando/Sweet July 2025), on the power of collective giving



I still say that to giving circle leaders. When they say, 'I don't want to ask them for money,' I say, 'You're not asking them for money, you are giving them an opportunity to have a political impact. And there is not a single person who's not looking for that opportunity. Right now you are bringing them a gift.'"

– Melissa Walker, Head of Giving Circles at [The States Project](#)

## Benefits/Reasons to Join



We talk about the impact of those ripples — you find those things that really pull on your heart, and that are almost like your calling. Giving circles can help you find your passion and purpose. For me, it was a transformative experience, because I have always loved giving back and serving others, which are traits embedded in my DNA. Through a friend, I stumbled upon learning about giving circles, helping to start one, and having unexpected doors opened for me. I never would have imagined that 20 years later, as a professional, I would no longer be in a technical role at my company, but one allowing me to leverage my grantmaking knowledge I gained through giving circles."

– Marsha Morgan, [Community Investment Network](#)



It's been positive in terms of exposing them to just greater awareness and knowledge of the realities of what's happening in segments of our community, both geographically and demographically, that they may feel they had a slight awareness about but not, quite a really deep and rich understanding, and just really getting exposed to building relationships with folks with different lived experiences."

– Jason Williams, [Social Venture Partners Boston](#)



I believe we're all interconnected globally — and so are our challenges, opportunities, and impact. This local and global connection — the grassroots work we do in each community AND the collective work we do across communities, sectors, and countries — is our greatest opportunity AND it's helping me evolve in my role and as a human being."

– Guff Van Vooren, [Social Venture Partners](#)

“

There's the networking aspect, the skill development, and all the professional development that comes from participating. We're all volunteers, so everybody who can pitches in. Most important is the sense of community, learning about our local nonprofits, and the issues in our community that are the reason nonprofits exist. Recognizing that we actually can make a difference if we work together. It's so inspirational when we have our awards celebration and we hear directly from the people being awarded the grants. One of the things we hear the most is, 'Thank you for seeing us. Thank you for acknowledging the work that we're doing.' Our work is rooted in equity, and it's really rewarding to understand that we could actually make the world a better place. We also do a lot of member education. We've learned about anti-bias, implicit bias, microaggressions, how to connect with people who believe differently than you do — all things that could help make each of us a better person. To have so many people want to learn how to be better people, and how to participate together and make a difference. Then to actually make changes in our organization to make it more inclusive, to make it more welcoming, has been super rewarding."

- Tammy Wilhoite, Coordinating Council Chair, [ninety-nine girlfriends](#)

“

I think the most beneficial part for me has been the community building. Through the giving circle, I have been connected to people I don't think I would have crossed paths with. It's like a magnet. It just draws people in."

- Lasindra Webb, [The SOAR Collective](#)

“

From a personal perspective, I feel empowered to continue to give. As I think about my relationship to philanthropy, it wasn't even a term that I really identified with. As I thought more about my own upbringing, I was surrounded by philanthropists in the form of teachers and mentors and nonprofit leaders my entire life. Seeing this opportunity to actually mobilize capital adds to that. I have a personal ethos of service and love. The relationships I've built with the women in my circle, the connection is different when you serve together, there's a depth and a true love. We have a Latina woman who is part of our circle. She's very, very involved. Through our experience, she's said, 'In a couple years, I'm going to be starting one for Latinas in the DMV.' And I said, 'Absolutely, and I'll be giving to your circle.' Her experience through the Tanna fund opened her eyes to what was possible. Now she and I have a beautiful friendship through that experience. Giving collectively fortifies those relationships with other women. You have that immediate likemindedness around service. It's just a deeper connection."

- Shannon Jeffries, [The Tanna Fund at Ipàdè](#)

““

How did I find the majority of our women? It was through acts of service...Those are the connections that you make; you have that same compassion for others and lead through service. They are the women who always show a willingness to help or volunteer and feel like it's their duty, ... That's why even through COVID, we were still strong, and we actually grew."

- Dyma AbuOleim, [200 Muslim Women Who Care](#)

““

We've been able to have a voice at the table when it comes to supporting the most needy and most vulnerable in our community, and sometimes that means the new immigrants coming into the community. It's good to know that the larger community can lean on us for cultural competency when it comes to serving our Muslim community."

- Dyma AbuOleim, [200 Muslim Women Who Care](#)

““

It's a way for us to live our values. It's also a way for us to interrupt what people think of as traditional philanthropy, or philanthropy with a capital P. A lot of what we do is help people connect back to their cultural practices of giving. We talk about how working class and poor people actually give more generously out of what they have. We talk about how the story of human survival is about the collective sharing of resources."

- Jillian Lane White, [North Star Fund](#)

““

The benefit that I've experienced in participating is really flipping my mindset of what \$1 means and how it has power, how it can be an opportunity, and learning how it can make a greater impact. And knowing that when people give, it gives them agency compared to the capitalist structure and compared to what institutional giving is all about. It's really been an incredible way to see the incredible work happening across the city of Philadelphia and being able to also pull our grantees together so they can lean on each other."

- Raksmeymony (Rex) Yin, [Asian Mosaic Fund](#)

““

It's actually a personal benefit. I don't do this professionally, so it's new to me. I get excited about philanthropy. I have moved away from my old mindset of, "Oh, it's about asking people for money all the time," and instead it's now about teaching people the joy of giving, and allowing them to see the impact of their gifts."

- Nabil Rehman, Board Member, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)

““

I have found collective giving, specifically, affinity based collective giving to be much more open and responsive way of doing work in terms of resource distribution, and that has breathed so much life into my other work there. I'm really able to take what we learn in the Latina giving circle and how we're moving in that space into the institutional grant making space."

- Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships, [The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)

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Professionally, the giving circle has been an opportunity to do the praxis part of certain types of philanthropy that are so far out of reach for institutional philanthropy in Arizona. It creates conditions where we get to, through our practice, really challenge the narrative that certain things are not possible. We're proving that this work can happen here, but we are choosing not to."

- Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships, [The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)

““

I know the value of things resonating culturally and to be able to do that in a way that is authentic to yourself. Collective giving is a big part of that in the Latino community."

- Latina philanthropy professional and giving circle member

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Collective giving gives us an opportunity to negotiate and navigate and interrogate power in a way that's different from a lot of other spaces."

- Chloe Silva, Director of Grantee Partnerships, [The Women's Foundation for the State of Arizona](#)

## Crises (COVID, Racial Justice)



If mainstream philanthropy misses the opportunity to support Muslim-led institutions, it will fall on complacency of not making a difference when it comes to standing up for anti-hate speech. Why is it that they may support one group and not another? You know, philanthropy showed up big in many ways for the Black Lives Matter movement. Rightfully so, and very important. ... It has done so for LGBTQ rights. And it has done so for other instances. But I think when it comes to anti-Muslim rhetoric, Islamophobia, there is a hesitancy to engage. And I question why that is. Is it because they don't have the proper resources? Or understanding? Or connections? I welcome you to connect with AMCF to learn more about these narratives of Muslim philanthropy, and how you can make a positive difference and not be a silent bystander."

- Muhi Khwaja, Co-Founder & Chief Development Officer, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)



Our annual giving cycle meetings during COVID happened on Zoom. They were a definite bright spot for all of us during a dark time. All of our giving that first year of COVID was incidentally very centered around families struggling because of COVID. Our minds and our hearts were preoccupied with the unprecedented nature of what we were experiencing and the accompanying isolation we felt and the financial hardships that many were going through. Our households were all positively impacted by being part of the collective. It carried us through a very dark time. We were all just really, really grateful to have that community, even if it was virtual for two years, to have that community to hold on to."

- Rabea Chaudhry, Bay Area Collective Giving in San Francisco, California, [American Muslim Community Foundation](#)



One of our challenges is the fact that we're online and that we're not in person. People joining a giving group want to get to know the other people. I think that in this semi post-COVID world that we live in, people are tired of zoom meetings and are looking for more of that personal interaction. We don't offer that because we're a nationwide group."

- Deirdre Murphy, Founder, [AttaGirl Giving Circle](#)



It was around 2020 or 2021, with support from the Leichtag Foundation we've been able to have some paid staff. To be honest with you, I think that is what kept the group going because a lot of people were very burned out, especially in the rapid response grant making that we had started doing in 2020. I don't know that the group would have sustained without those funds. That was a really big deal for the group."

- Alison Aragon, Member of the [Latina Giving Circle](#) in San Diego

## Background/Link to Collective Giving



I started SAM to inspire people to give and to have a meaningful impact. I wanted to bring together like-minded individuals who wanted to take ownership of their philanthropy and learn about the needs of the community. SAM has grown every year since 2013 as members continue to share the joy and power of collaborative giving. My passion is not only collaborative giving, but it is also helping people help themselves. I am building on SAM's success in supporting social enterprises to use collaborative giving to provide microfinance support to historically underserved entrepreneurs. This comes from a history of my work in Latin America, where I was aiding in microloans to entrepreneurs in graduate school. I am passionate about fostering sustainable economic growth and lasting change"

- Mindy Freedman, [The SAM Initiative](#)



This year, we are working with a research group to do a demographic study of all AAPI people in Colorado, and it will be the first of its kind study on any race or ethnicity in the state. That's huge because AAPI, depending on who you include or who you exclude, includes 20 to 30 countries and over 200 languages. We're going to release it in May, which is AAPI month. We've called it the Colorado Lotus Project because the lotus flower is one of the few things that grows in our native countries. There were a couple of motivations. One was the AAPI hate happening during the pandemic. The second one was that there was a study by AAPIP that showed private philanthropy is underinvesting in AAPI communities. Finally, the US Census did not lump all Asians into one category. That is a real opportunity."

- Kristi Keolakai, The Colorado AAPI Circle



The reason I joined the group back in 2017 is because I was coming into a time in my nonprofit career when I was going to start grant writing, and I wanted to understand what it looked like on the other side. I was really new to it all. I thought reading grants and understanding how they're looked at might be helpful to this kind of career change. I was looking for a group where I could see myself in, and see my experience in, and feel my family in, and feel that the ways that I had learned giving back to the community when I was young reflected in a less structured way that philanthropy is and often becomes."

- Alison Aragon, Member of the [Latina Giving Circle](#) in San Diego



And the joy of not funding a successful project but actually investing in community projects and being part of what makes it successful. ...The joy of not looking for successes, but helping to make something successful and playing a part in that feels to me as someone who has spent a lot of time in the nonprofit sector as just a different way of viewing it. It is a different way of investing...The community bonds are really huge. We do a lot of social activities and it's great."

- Chitra Aiyar, [Asian Women Giving Circle](#)



The reason I got involved in LatinasGive was that when I was working at a foundation, I often found that I would, through my own background, funds of knowledge and personal networks be connected to potential grant partners. The potential grant partners would reach out to me but I was not in the position to nurture it and follow it through. But in a giving circle, I can follow a potential grant partner the whole way. I often find that the things that are most progressive or dynamic are changing at the giving circle level. I can bring that and lift it up into the more formal part of philanthropy that seems entrenched in some ways."

- Latina philanthropy professional and giving circle member